

In Shadows  
Thirty Detective Stories

DETECTIVE NICK HARRIS





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## SO SAYS THE PRESS

*THE BULLETIN, San Francisco, Calif.*

Detective Nick Harris has captured some of the biggest criminals of the country. He knows the genus "crook" from every angle of the police and detective game. He is familiar with the vagaries of the moron, the lesions of the confirmed offender, and the lapses of the professional delinquent. Some of the most thrilling and fascinating of his experiences are embodied in this series.

*THE EVENING HERALD, Los Angeles, Calif.*

There is humor and pathos in these stories—bits of lights and shadows culled from the great stamping ground of the criminal offender. They are tales that are rooted below the "deadline" of social approval. Some touch the highest strata of society and others dip to the lowest depths. Many of these stories have never before been given to the public.

*THE TRIBUNE, San Diego, Calif.*

The life of a *real* detective; his daily experiences, the tales he is told; the facts he uncovers; the garish, sordid, startling and peculiar phases of life with which he comes in contact, form the most fascinating reading in the world.

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If you have sat spellbound with Sherlock Holmes, breathlessly tense with Monsieur Lecoq, keenly thrilled by Gaborieau, enthralled by Anna Katherine Green, and intrigued by Mary Roberts Rinehart, you will be *gripped* by the stories of Nick Harris.

*THE POST, Pasadena, Calif.*

The stories of Nick Harris are true bits of real life, uncovered by the spotlight of official inquiry.

*THE ENTERPRISE, Riverside, Calif.*

They are *real* detective stories. You will like them.

Published by  
*The TIMES-MIRROR Press*  
*Los Angeles, Calif.*



# SO SAYS THE PUBLIC

FRANKLIN SWART,

Secretary, District Attorneys' Association of California.

I am very much interested in your book which you are about to publish on the subject, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." Perhaps the most shocking fact of my experience as a prosecutor is that our criminals are growing younger and younger, and your stories seem to sift the wheat from the chaff and point out to the growing young man and woman the moral and fundamental and are most attractive and readable stories for our boys and girls.

J. WHITCOMB BROUGHER, D.D.,

Pastor, Temple Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Calif.

Detective Nick Harris tells us in an interesting and gripping way "Why Crime Does Not Pay." He speaks with authority for he has had a wide experience in dealing with the characters of the underworld. His illustrations are from life and they show very clearly the folly of seeking wealth or happiness through crime. His stories furnish a striking illustration of the age long text, "Be sure your sin will find you out." He proves conclusively that "the wages of sin is death." His stories are more interesting than a novel for they are the "real thing."

FRED MEYER,

Organizer, B. M. S. Boys' Club, Los Angeles, Calif.

I hear that you are contemplating publishing a book of Real Detective Stories. I want to go on record as saying that would be one of the finest things that you could do for the Younger Generation.

J. BROMLEY OXNAM,

Pastor, Church of All Nations, Los Angeles, Calif.

Detective Nick Harris delivered lectures to our boys upon the theme, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." He reached into the heart of the underworld and brought forth stories that left one impression upon the minds of our boys: namely, that crime is a losing game, and that uprightness is the only course one should pursue. I hope every boy may get this message from his book.

CLINTON J. TAFT,

Pastor, Plymouth Congregational Church, Los Angeles, Calif.

I hope every mother and father can secure a copy of this great work to read to their children. A lesson is taught that will be lasting. An impression will be made on the youth in a fashion that will hold his interest, as these detective stories are told by one who knows of the dangers and pitfalls that surround the child.

J. LINCOLN BLAKE.

Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America,

Old Baldy District Council, Pomona, Calif.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I am writing to let you know how much our men as well as myself appreciated your address, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." You are to be congratulated for having made possible such a valuable piece of inside information on the subject of Crime. If you succeed in publishing a book on "Why Crime Doesn't Pay," I shall be only too glad to boost it as well as recommend it to all of my co-workers as well as my friends.

JOHN F. HUBER,

Pres., Los Angeles Automobile Trade Association, Los Angeles, Calif.

I just cannot begin to tell you how much good you can do and are doing; our men as well as myself appreciated your address, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." I sincerely hope that you will compile a book on this subject as it would do a tremendous lot of good and would have a tendency, I believe, to curtail crime.

GEORGE NEILL,

Program Director, KFI, Radio Central Station of Earl C. Anthony, Inc.,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

It is with pleasure that I recommend to all of our listening public, your new book, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay," as I think it will spread the message into the heart of the underworld and burn the seed of crime therein.

DR. MAURICE SMITH,

Vice Pres., B'Nai Brith Lodge, Los Angeles, Calif.

Your new book, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay," should prove of great educational value to the boys and girls of today in showing them the folly of leading a life of crime.





Wm. P. Harris



✓  
IN THE SHADOWS

*Thirty Detective Stories*

SHOWING

“Why Crime Doesn’t Pay”

*A Series of Famous Cases*

BY

DETECTIVE NICK HARRIS ✓

Los Angeles

*The* TIMES-MIRROR Press

1923

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LOS ANGELES, CALIF.



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DEDICATED TO MY WIFE, MARY MARTIN HARRIS,  
ON HER BIRTHDAY, APRIL 27, 1923



AS A BEACON LIGHT SHINES A WARNING TO SHIPS  
IN TROUBLED WATERS, JUST SO WITH THIS SERIES OF  
STORIES DO I WISH TO GUIDE THE MINDS OF OUR LESS  
FORTUNATE FELLOW BEINGS.

## P R E F A C E

I N the early part of 1922, a representative of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce called at my office in that city, and wanted me to place an exhibit at the Pageant of Progress to be held in July of that year in the City of Los Angeles and which was to be given under the auspices of the local Chamber.

I wondered just what sort of a display a detective agency could place before the public that would be not only interesting, but educational as well. It then occurred to me that if I could present to my audiences something that would serve as a warning to the unsuspecting public, I could, perhaps, render my bit in fighting the crime wave then sweeping over the country, and show the younger generation just "Why Crime Doesn't Pay."

Hence, from my office records I secured the official news pictures of three of the most important criminal cases, our office had been connected with, particularly the famous "Bluebeard Watson Murder," the "Witherell Kidnapping Case," and the celebrated "Trunk Bandit" affair.

In each of these cases I was able to show the public a great moral lesson, as well as forewarn the individual of the absolute fallacy of committing crime.

As a result various chambers of commerce throughout Southern California requested me to install the same exhibit in their respective exhibitions or county fairs, they afterwards presented.

Later, I was approached by many pastors of the leading churches, secretaries of various Rotary, Advertising,

Lions, Kiwanis, Exchange, Mutual and other civic clubs, to speak before their congregations and luncheons on the subject, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." Then came a request from Mr. George Neill, program director KFI Radio Central Station of Earle C. Anthony, Inc., located on the Packard Bldg., Los Angeles, to broadcast these stories each Wednesday night.

For some years past I had contributed to the press of California many detective stories, each of which dealt with this subject. All of this resulted in hundreds of queries, letters, and personal requests being sent and made to me to compile a book that would more forcibly bring before the world the message I was trying to give, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay."

It is now with great pleasure that I have at last fulfilled my promise to these friends and submit my offerings to the end that my readers may enjoy them, and that some material good may be derived by the youth of after years, that they may profit from the mistakes of those who have *Paid the Price* of transgressing the laws of God and man.

Yours for the better boy and girl,

NICHOLAS BOILVIN HARRIS.



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# IN THE SHADOWS

PROVING

*“Why Crime Doesn’t Pay”*

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## THE CONFESSION OF A MASTER BURGLAR

SINCE the World War, police officials throughout the United States will tell you that crime has increased many fold. I do not know whether this condition also exists in other great nations. Many have tried to place the blame. Some claim the unrestful mental condition of the returned soldiers; others say prohibition has caused the excessive use of narcotics. I will not try to answer. I am to deal only on the subject of my title, “Why Crime Doesn’t Pay,” even though it is the result of these or some other causes.

Crime is defined by some authorities as follows: “An act which violates a law or rule, divine or human, and subjects to judgment or condemnation the evildoer.”

Another authority defines crime in this way—“Crime: A term used to indicate a violation of the higher moral law, sometimes more specifically the violation of a certain group of the laws, formulated by a city, state or nation. This group properly comprises in its scheme all offenses endangering the welfare of the community.”

Let us for a moment turn back the pages of history and see its results. The first crime was committed when Adam and Eve violated the trust and command of God.

After years men ascended the thrones of the mighty, either by inheritance or force of conquest. Some dug

their own foundations out from under them as a result of their own crimes and dissipations, just at a time when they felt such a thing was impossible.

Think of the days of the Spanish Inquisition. Was it not the wilful violation of the laws of God and nature that caused the throne of Spain to totter and left a stain in after years that has never been eradicated? Then recall the crimes of the sea pirates, who roamed the billowy waters for years, only to be crushed and stamped out of existence by the power of law and order.

Just so in modern days. Crime does not succeed any better than it did in olden times. It can't. The law of average is against it. The mutual betting system on the race track at Tia Juana is a sure winner (for the bookmakers). They are bound to get their percentage first. The wise ones running this system have figured it out. The old style Bookies have been known to go broke many times, when some long shot led the field. The average winning is in their favor, but fate may play the unexpected trick. Hence the Paris Mutuels.

This rule also applies in crime. The real smart crooks may go along for several years. They think all the luck in the world is with them when suddenly from the hidden unknown up pops Mr. Law of Average and bingo! the air castle topples to the ground. They have got to get in the Mutuels, their percentage must be figured, and the only way they can get in is by playing straight.

I have seen so many times in my professional career how true this is. I remember many years ago when I was a police reporter, and long before the famous book of "Raffles" was published, there were continuous reports of a master burglar's operations coming into police headquarters. The crimes were all most mysterious. The best detectives of the country, both police and private



agencies, were bending their efforts to land this mystery man.

Swell receptions and functions were covered by these sleuths, and still somehow or other the "mouse" would slip out of the trap. Thousands of dollars' worth of jewels would be his prize. In those days South Figueroa street was the fashionable residential section of Los Angeles. One rainy night while a large social affair was taking place in the McLaughlin residence just across the street from the Stimpson mansion in the 2400 block, a porch climber made away with quite a haul. It was the first job of this kind we reporters ever knew of. We played it up for many columns.

Next week another house was touched off in the same way. One of us coined the name of "Monkey Bandit," because his work was always the same. The gentleman always gained entrance and took his leave by this route, over the front porch. There were several of these jobs pulled during the next few months. Then we heard no more.

A few weeks later, what we would now call the Raffles stunt started. Diamond necklaces would mysteriously drop from the well-formed necks of portly matrons never to be seen again by the owners. Then came the day of reckoning for this master-mind burglar; the man paramount in his profession, if we can call his vocation such.

The tingling of the phone bell on my desk told me the city editor was calling.

"Nick," he said, "I just got a funny call. A woman who runs a rooming house out on West Jefferson street phoned that a wounded man was in one of her rooms in bed and she didn't know what to do. She said he just came in and said he had to go to bed. I don't know why she picked on me and not some doctor. Thought you'd better look into it and see what's in the story."



I took the address and started out of the press room, when it occurred to me that there had been a shooting scrape the night before on the front porch of the Edward L. Doheny residence, in Chester Place. Captain John Henderickson, since killed by two young boy bandits, had the private police patrol of this select park. He had intercepted a burglar about to climb the porch of Mr. Doheny's home. A shooting resulted in which the Captain was shot through the sleeve, and a trail of blood was left on the sidewalk, showing Henderickson's aim had registered true to his reputation. But the burglar escaped.

I wondered, could this be Jack's man. I rushed into the office of Captain A. J. Bradish, then in charge of the Detective Bureau, and told him of my hunch. Bradish picked up his pearl-handled hammerless from the desk and called Detective Sergeant Joseph Rich and said, "Joe, I think Nick has a line on our Monkey Bandit. Let's go."

In those days there were but few autos, and none in the service of the police department, so he called Tom Rico to bring the patrol wagon drawn by the two gray horses.

Upon our arrival, the landlady was standing on the sidewalk, an old gray shawl over her head and she was wringing her kitchen apron with both hands. We had left the wagon at the corner.

"Do you live here?" asked Bradish.

"Yes," she said, "and I am waiting for the police. I am afraid to go into my house. A man came this morning and told me he was shot and wanted to rent a room and for me to call a doctor and I don't know what to do. He may die and I—I—"

Bradish politely got a chance to shut off her flowing words, while she was getting her second wind, and found

out that the fellow was upstairs in the back bedroom to the right of the hall.

He told her to go up and introduce him as the doctor and he and Rich would do the rest. Of course I took the cue and followed. This quick thinking on the part of Bradish again showed me the Master Detective he always was.

Upon entering the room, and as the landlady tried to stammer her instruction, the fellow seemed to sense something wrong and half turned his back, and started to reach his good arm under the pillow.

Bradish and Rich also outthought him, and like a flash their two revolvers were sticking in his ribs, followed with a command to lie still. Bradish pulled the pillow from under his head and there clutched in his left hand was a weapon that looked to me like a cannon.

"I guess the game is up, young man," said Bradish. "We've got you at last. When will you fellows ever learn that *crime doesn't pay*?"

That was the first time I ever had those words impressed upon me.

We took him back into the Receiving Hospital, where Bradish called Paul Flammer, then chief of the Bureau of Identification. One look at the young face of the wounded man and Flammer said, "Open your mouth."

Two gold teeth were all that was necessary for this eagle-eyed Bertillon man to see to convince him that there before him lay Philip McNary, the Gentleman Burglar, the Monkey Bandit, and, worst of all, the alleged murderer of a policeman in Oakland.

Several days passed, as he lay upon the hospital cot, recovering from a bullet wound in his left arm and chest, and awaiting the arrival of Northern officers to take him to Oakland to stand trial for murder. This gave me many chances to talk to him, and he told me of how he

had followed this primrose path since he was fifteen years old. He was now twenty-seven. He said he had never been caught, but that once while he was robbing a millionaire's residence on Lake Shore drive in Chicago, he bumped into some piece of furniture and awoke the servants. The only place he could hide was in a large cloisonne vase, where he stayed all the balance of that night and next day and into the next night, when he finally escaped.

Bradish and Rich recovered nearly all of the plunder McNary gained in the Los Angeles jobs and he was sent away. He is still paying the price. I met him once afterwards in San Quentin and he told me this:

"Harris, I never knew what was in store for me. If you could only tell those young fellows outside how I have suffered, I think it would do a lot of good. Tell them I was lucky for a while. Yes, twelve years. I felt I could never be caught. Why, when I used to go out to Westlake Park every morning and take my daily recreation in those pretty little canoes, and watch the long-neck swans come up beside the boats and eat popcorn that I brought to feed them, and heard the splashing of the water in the little falls at the north end of the lake, I little thought that some day I would be here 'doing it all,' as these inmates call it. Then, again, tell them the days are not the bad part of the game here, but tell them it's the nights.

"Tell them the midnights of the far North have nothing on these ten hours after sundown. Tell them when I hear the clanging of the steel doors, and the ringing of our closing bell, I just begin to realize what freedom really means. Take that message, Harris, to the outside and preach it to those birds who think they can beat the game. Tell them what Bradish said to me when I reached for that iron (revolver) under my pillow. Tell



more about our lives up here, so they will know. It is education along these lines these young fellows need. They won't listen to their mothers and fathers; it takes some one else, some outsider to impress upon them that crime never pays. The odds are all against us."

It was this talk with McNary behind the grey walls of San Quentin that impressed me with the idea that if I could ever muster up courage to talk before large audiences, I would try my best to make good to him and deliver his message to mankind, that they might realize that if a Master Mind like his could not keep him out of the *Big House*, what chance has the novice.

## THE SUFFERING OF THE INNOCENT

**I**N Part One of this series, I recounted the pleadings of Philip McNary, the Raffles, the Monkey Bandit and the alleged murderer, as told to me behind the grey walls of San Quentin. He asked me to deliver a message to the outside, to tell the young fellows why crime doesn't pay. I must word picture another example, perhaps more impressive, possibly more serious. One, perchance, that will fasten itself more definitely in the minds of those for whom these stories are intended. Hence, I am going to tell of the sufferings of the innocent ones at home. Not the criminal himself, but those who watch and wait for his homecoming. Those who, after all, pay most.

In one of the stories I contributed to the press I told of Micky, the pal of Jimmy the Rat. He was finally shot and killed in Texas. A day or two after its publication, I received the following letter:

*Dear Sir:—*

*Last night I finished reading your story about Micky. We had a brother Micky. He was the black sheep in our family. He had red hair and freckles just as you described. When you told of how he cried out in the court room to Jimmy, who thought he had been double-crossed by Micky, I could just picture our Micky boy. He was always so sensitive and impulsive. He left us five years ago, and we have never heard from him since. Then when you said he had been killed in a gun battle with Texas officers, we all became curious. I am writing to ask if you will please send us the last name of Micky, so that we may know if it was our lad, or if it wasn't him we can still have hopes of his return.*

*(Signed) MRS. L. JOHNSON,  
Genl. Delv., San Francisco, Calif.*



I answered this letter and told her Micky's last name was Mulvain. I never received an answer. Perhaps it was her Micky, perhaps not; perhaps I will never know. I do know, however, that those at Micky's home were suffering. They were waiting for the prodigal son who wandered down the rugged path that leads to misery and suffering.

It seems that all things work in cycles. I had just mailed the answer to this sister, when my secretary informed me that Jack —— wanted to see me. For the sake of the boy I will not mention his last name. He, too, had been a burglar,—one of the best in the field. He was only twenty-four. I met him first, two days after the robbery of a Seventh Street silk store.

The burglars had entered this shop by prying up a back window. Police and special watchmen covered these premises every half hour. Yet the burglars rifled the shop of some \$5,000 worth of bolted silk. They tried to open a small safe weighing several hundred pounds. They couldn't, so they just took it along, too, on the stolen truck backed in the alley.

They left undiscovered, but fate was against them, as it always is in matters of this kind. Four bolts of plunder were bumped off the truck along the streets of Los Angeles and turned over to the police by early morning autoists. Each finder was requested to tell just where he had picked up the silk. Each told of places several miles apart from the other.

I was called into the case by the Merchant Victim and found Police Detective Sergeants Edward King and Louis D. Oaks, Teddy Mailheu and Roy Shy were on the detail from headquarters. We all thought of our kid days when we used to play fox and geese. We were trained then to follow the cuttings of paper left by the supposed geese. The papers represented the feathers

and we played the part of the fox. This day we would still be the fox following the "Silken Feathers" of the silly geese. The trail led out into the beautiful La Canada Valley. There on the Boulevard just back of Tropico and just south of a beautiful picnic ground was found the last bolt.

Tracks in the soft dirt plainly showed where the thieves had driven to some hidden and thickly timbered rendezvous. Marshaling our forces together, we decided to attack the place from four sides. We all set our watches so we would come to a certain point in the center at the same time, as we figured these robbers would be armed and fireworks would surely start if we entered single-handed.

Our plan carried to the second. We found the stolen truck stuck in the sand. It was empty, but under the heavy brush we found the battered safe and all its contents, except the money. The birds had flown also.

We all returned to town and started all over again. Nothing to work on except the percentage which is always in favor of law and order. The thieves must have an outlet for their ill-gotten gains. They must realize cash to pay for their trouble.

I will pass over the next few hours of our investigation, merely to say we found a lead, and one of my agents, Gravate Wigginton, informed us that he had met one of the burglars and arranged to buy the loot. He had measured every yard, and could take us to the little cottage where it was stored. Police Detectives Oaks, King, Claude Morgan, Tommy Cochrane and Harlan Martin of my office and I raided the house, and awaited the arrival of Wigginton and the burglar.

We found only a frightened little woman and her baby when we entered the place. She said the stuff piled high behind a bed had been left there that morning by a

friend of her husband. She claimed she was innocent and had no knowledge of the crime. Nevertheless, we would have to hold her for further investigation. We waited for her husband to come home. Perhaps he was one of the gang. A friend of his came first. Four guns in the hands of determined officers greeted him as he swung open the kitchen door. We hustled him into one of the other rooms and awaited the rest.

Then came Wigginton and our burglar. The latter had walked into the trap. When he saw we had the young wife, and intended to take her with us, real tears came into his eyes as he looked at her and then at us and said:

"Gentlemen, I give up. If you will promise to let this girl and her baby go I will come clean. She doesn't know a thing about this at all. I will go and take my fall like a man if you will only listen to me. I realize now as never before how I am making this little woman suffer. It was through her husband's kindness that I was able to park this junk in this house. Neither she nor her husband know that this stuff is "*hot*" (stolen goods). I told them I had bought it from some sailors to peddle, and was afraid it might be stolen from me if I left it up town. That's the truth, so help me God!"

As he finished, in walked the husband, who was arrested by Morgan and Cochrane, whom we had left on guard on the outside. The husband told the same story. It was the same story the wife had told us earlier.

We believed him (the burglar), as he held out his hands and told us to slip on the cuffs and go.

We found his partner in jail. He had just been arrested for stealing a second-hand tire, valued at about three dollars. Here was another master burglar, a victim of fate's strange pranks. But fate had played a strange game. He had blown a tire on his own car and



being in a hurry to meet his pal, just picked up the cheap tire from in front of a vulcanizing store, only to be seen by a plain-clothes man and brought to the station.

Such was the ending of their case so far as we were concerned except that we testified at their trial and they were sent away.

### JACK CALLS

I had most forgotten the incident, until my secretary announced that Jack was in the outer office.

"Show him in, please," I answered.

"Well, Jack, when did you get out?" I said, as a shamed-faced boy entered my office.

"About a month ago, Nick, and I want to talk to you."

Many times before, these bad boys had called on me after doing their bit, and really I was glad to see them. It makes a fellow in my game feel great to think these chaps have that spark of manhood left to come to one who might have had a hand in their going away.

"Nick, you know I was good at the game when you all got me, and I don't want you to think I am trying to hand you any bunk. You know I never squealed on my pal or anything like that. I told you I would take the fall and I did. But listen, I am cured. I am going straight. Not because of the jolt I got or the fear of taking another. I was never yellow in all my life. But I tell you I am cured."

"Well Jack," I said, "that's fine; but, boy, I have heard them say that before. Some have kept their word, but some I know have not. I—I—"

"Just a minute, Nick, just a minute," he interrupted as he flipped the ashes from a newly lit cigarette. "I said I am cured, and that goes. It's what my dear old mother sprung on me this morning that's made a Chris-

tian out of me, today. Let me tell you!"

I sank down deep in my chair and was really anxious to hear his story.

Again I fancied I could trace a slight swelling in his lower eyelids. I thought I saw a tear-drop trickle down his pale cheek and bury itself on his coat front.

"Shoot, Jack, I want to hear," I said, as I realized that it would probably be something I had never heard before.

"Well, today at breakfast, my mother put her arms around me and placed the morning paper before me. 'Read that, my son, and then I want to talk to you.'

"I looked and saw in big letters, clean across the front page, an account of the attempted holdup of the payroll of the Ice and Cold Storage Plant. It went on to tell how five stickup men had walked into a trap and were shot in their tracks by deputy sheriffs when they refused to surrender.

"I looked at mother and said, 'What's that got to do with me. I wasn't on that job. I don't know that mob.'

" 'Yes, I know, my boy, but read on,' she said.

"On the next page the article went on to tell of how one of the bandits was unidentified, and how his widowed mother had received a mysterious phone call to go to a certain undertaking establishment, and there she found the unknown dead burglar was her own boy, shot through the heart and temple.

"When I finished reading, my mother kissed me and said:

" 'Jackie, boy, that mother might have been me. Think, my baby, what that mother suffered as she stood beside the cold and silent form of her own offspring. Think, Jackie, how she had looked forward all these years to the day she could point with pride at some great achievement this lad might have accomplished in the busi-



ness world. That's what all mothers look forward to. Then think, my son, of her disappointment, the sorrow and the suffering she must pass through. He owed her more than that. Didn't he, Jackie?

" 'Yes he did, mother,' I whispered, as I threw my arms around her and kissed away the tears on that dear old lady's face. It was then I saw the light of day. I saw that which I never thought of before. The selfishness of us in the crooked game. I promised her I would call it quits. I am done; I am finished; I am cured. And now, Nick, if all these chaps that's pulling the stickups and the burglaries and the oil station jobs could have heard what my old lady said to me, they'd be cured, too. Now I want an honest job. Can you help me?"

He meant what he said. I got him a job for a few days until he landed a better one, but I think he is deserving of a still better one, and as this is not a fiction story and I have Jack's address, I am willing to back him to any sincere reader who can give him the helping hand of fellowship which will prove to him the title to my article, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay" is true.

## FIGHT CRIME WITH ADVERTISING

**J**UST at this time civic and private organizations have banded their members together in a determined effort to fight the crime epidemic now sweeping over our country. Without a question, the recently organized Community Development Association of Los Angeles will prove the most effective. Those responsible for its origin hit the keynote of its success when they gathered into its fold a representative of every newspaper in Los Angeles. Without the combined cooperation of the press, no public movement can ever expect a satisfactory conclusion.

When Chief of Police Louis D. Oaks took office, I suggested to him that he would immediately form what might be called an advisory police cabinet to consist of at least twenty-five members, these members to be selected as follows: One representative from each newspaper, one from each religious faith, one from the Chamber of Commerce and one from the Labor Council, and one from each of the Civic Clubs, both men's and women's.

This, in my opinion, would place behind his administration a force of citizens who from time to time could get behind him and create a condition of police administration that would result in such an array of talent aligned against the foes of law and order as to make them seek other fields to ply their nefarious operations.

The Chief said: "Nick, that plan is great. I hope to see it take effect. Just as soon as I get familiar with all the conditions that now confront me, I will surely place

the matter before Mayor Cryer and the Police Commission."

Then came the organization of the Community Development Association, and which I feel sure will bring about the same if not greater results.

From my experience of over twenty years in dealing with the criminal classes, I found one has got to deal with them like we would with any dangerous business proposition. They have got to be shown through the medium of education just why "Crime Doesn't Pay." The fear of God and the power of law enforcement forces must be impressed upon them. They are a good deal like a child who runs away from school and goes swimming in some place not permitted. The parents of this child can talk their heads off or perhaps whip him, and it won't always bring results. But let some big, burly policeman or truant officer catch him in swimming and take most of his clothes from him and make him walk through the streets, half dressed, to the police station—the child will get a scare and lasting impression that will remain with him for all time.

I don't mean to take this child and throw him in jail when he arrives at the police station to mix with criminals therein confined, because that would be the worst thing that could happen. I mean if that big policeman would usher this boy into the presence of the Captain of Police, who is all decked out in his blue and gold uniform and this commander would take the time to talk to this lad in a kindly manner and tell him of how he himself used to play hookey from school, and was able to get only in the sixth grade, and how now in latter years he had to sit up nights to regain the knowledge he threw away when he was a kid, and which he could have had for nothing. A talk like this to the boy, coming from the big man in the department, would be such a surprise that the child would



immediately grasp the thought and remember it forevermore.

On the other hand, and yet which contradicts my theory, in part, I remember two women about nineteen years of age, whom my agents had arrested for shoplifting, and who were placed in jail over night. It recalls to my memory how one of these was cured by the fright she received that night.

These girls were just about ready to break into a life of crime. They had lived in one of the smaller towns, and ran away. They came to Los Angeles and obtained work in a restaurant. They could not earn enough to satisfy their new city desires, and wanted new clothes, so they went into one of our big stores and proceeded to remove two dresses from the racks over to their own room, without using the customary system in vogue of transferring from their pocketbooks the purchase price.

Miss Eunice Alexander, one of my store detectives saw the operation and of course detained them. One of the girls put up a terrific battle at the corner of Fifth and Broadway, but, finally, with the aid of the Traffic Officer, Tommy O'Connor, they were taken back into the store, and into the superintendent's office. I was called and took them to jail. Naturally, I thought they were bad actors and locked them up.

Next morning I called at the women's quarters of the city jail and was asked by the matron to go into the case carefully, as she felt these girls were not so bad as we first thought. Many times these police women stationed in the cell rooms of the female section had given me valuable aid, due, I think, to their close study of female offenders. Many times they have been the means of having my prisoners confess their crimes, and caused me to recover many hundreds of dollars worth of stolen mer-

chandise belonging to the big department stores of this city.

I told the matron to bring the girls into her office and I would talk to them. When they entered, both were crying, and the one that had put up the battle was shaking like a leaf. All the fight had been taken out of her.

I asked them what they thought about it now.

"Oh, Mr. Officer, let us go home. We don't like the city or this jail; we will never steal again." The one now speaking was the one who had not tried to carry off Dempsey's honors. "We will be good, Mister, from now on. Clara will die if she spends another night here. Please, please let us go."

I turned to the matron and asked what she thought about them, and why she asked me to go easy.

"Well, Mr. Harris, I'll tell you," she said; "last night when you brought her in, Mrs. McPeak was on duty. This girl, Clara, was very defiant. She just kept singing and acted so that Mrs. McPeak told her that if she didn't go to sleep she would put her in the dark room. You know we are so crowded four girls have to occupy the same cell. Each, of course, in separate beds.

"Well, she first took off one shoe and threw it so hard on the floor that it wakened the other prisoners; then she kicked over a chair and knocked over a metal pitcher of water and shouted, 'I don't have to stay here with this nigger woman.'

"Just then Black Mandy, who had been arrested for drunkenness, rose up from her bunk, and standing over Clara and with the pitcher in an upraised hand, said, 'Who you-all call Nigger?'

"That was enough. Mrs. McPeak rushed in and stopped the fracas and placed Clara in another cell. But she sure got the scare of her life. I don't think she will want to come back here again."



I made further investigation of the case and found the mothers and fathers of these girls were very respected ranchers, living near Glendora, and had been searching for a week for these waywards. I got them suspended sentences, and to this day they are cured.

Of course, that sort of treatment would not apply in all cases by any means, yet it is getting back to my contention that it takes education to show some offenders that crime does not pay.

If I were on the Anti-Crime Commission of the Community Development Association, I would urge a campaign of out-of-door advertising. I would hang on the lamp posts on Broadway for a few days, big red signs, written in the language of the underworld, something about as follows:

*Beware, this town's on fire. We stand for no rough stuff. Be good or beat it.*

*(Signed) Chief of Police.*

And under the Chief's name I would put, "Community Development Association," backed by the Anti-Crime Committee, etc.

This would have the effect of letting the mobs know this town was too hot for them. They would stop and think. Just as many of us have thought when we saw the work of some religious person who paints on our culverts and fences along the highways, "The Wages of Sin is Death."

Advertise! We do it in business. The churches now tell of the sermons of tomorrow of their pastors, and that's what we must do to combat this element.

Advertise and educate the young and see the results in after years. We must advertise "That Crime Doesn't Pay."

## MABEL'S MISTAKE

**I**N my last article I expressed my theory of the proper way to curb the crime wave. I said we must educate criminals by the modern means of advertising "Why Crime Doesn't Pay." We must show them the folly of their wrong-doing and the reward they reap in the end.

In this chapter, I will continue to point out other salient features of my argument. I will try and get down underneath and see if, after all, it is not in childhood, wherein this dangerous seed has been planted. I will start at the time a child is about five years old.

Do you recall when you were a child of this age and had done something your parents knew was not just right, and how they used to tell you that if you didn't behave they would tell that big policeman to come and get you? And do you remember how you gradually learned to hate every officer you would see afterwards? When you grew into manhood, that same feeling just sort of clung to you and you felt more bitter against them, when you saw some bull-headed policeman needlessly bellowing out some command to a thoughtless autoist for some slight infraction of the traffic laws.

That's the natural result. It may have so happened that your path led into legitimate vocations. But think of the other fellow or girl who fell into bad company, and later had official business with the police. Think what their attitude must be. How their hate of the blue uniform and brass buttons must have been enlarged.

Now let's look at the other side. If we, as children, had been brought up to regard these officers as our friends

and protectors, and some of these chaps would realize they were there to please and serve the public, what a different feeling would exist.

For example, I know of certain officers directing traffic on the busy down-town corners, who are idolized by the public. Christmas packages by the score are given to them every year. Why? I know why. I have stood and watched them, and never once heard them "bawl out" a single citizen who unintentionally violated the rules. I watched their faces and when they called the driver's attention to his mistake they did it in such a fashion that plainly showed they had not unnecessarily embarrassed the occupants of the car. A smile and word of warning was their parting salutation. Some will say this is all bunk, and if I had been detailed on these crossings I would soon get that notion out of my mind. But they are wrong. These same officers I speak of have either held these jobs down for years or else have advanced to some higher offices in the department. As for the other kind, sooner or later they would step on the wrong fellow's toes and are now walking beats in the Fog District, as we in the police game call it.

I think one of the greatest moves ever made in proper policing of a city is that in which policemen are being detailed at crossings where schoolhouses are located.

When this detail was first made, you would see the children shy at these blue-coated guardians who wanted to help them across the streets, but look at the situation now. The little kiddies will run up to the big Copper and almost fight each other to grasp his hand. I even saw one little tot the other day open her lunch box and give the big fellow a red apple. His face beamed with as much happiness as though the Mayor had decorated him for bravery.

Just a day or two ago Chief Louis D. Oaks, of the



Los Angeles Police Department, received the following letter :

*Dear Chief of Police:*

*there is a nice traffic officer at Vernon and Moneta avenue. We children do love him very much he is so kind to us he carries us across the street when it is raining won't you please Mister Chef let him stay thir always. what would we do if you shold take him away. there is a 8 on his badge.*

*yours lovingly*

*Lucy Jane Faulk,  
3807 So. Hill Street.*

The officer was R. N. Amos of the University Division. I know him well and can back up this child's judgment. So did Chief Oaks. It is impressions like these made upon the young children that will bring about the real desires of all peace and justice-loving citizens.

I once arrested one of the most clever shoplifters that ever operated in Los Angeles. She was being questioned by my general manager, Wm. G. Hanson. Hanson is a University Graduate. His mind is always centered on the scientific analysis of matters of this sort. He wants to dig into the research part of the case to find the cause. Because of this girl's apparent refinement, which seemed to radiate from her he asked this question :

"Miss, how did you happen to get into this sort of business? You don't seem to fit in, somehow."

The girl tipped back her vanity case and said:

"I was born in Chicago. My father was arrested when I was a child for a crime he was not guilty of. He had endorsed a check given to him by another man. This check was worthless. He could not find the other man and was unable to prove his innocence. He was sentenced to Joliet penitentiary for seven years. My mother was left to take care of us three children, a brother and a sister. Father had told us he was innocent and we knew he



told the truth. This early education of the mistake of the Blind Justice made me hate everything that had anything to do with her. I grew up to beat her if I could. But I am afraid the cards are stacked against me. Or perhaps for the one wrong she committed she had thousands of good judgments in her favor. So you see the percentage is always against me.

"You ask why I don't stop. I can best explain that by telling you of a little incident that happened in my life later.

"Our mob had been cleaning the big stores (shoplifting) in Philadelphia when Edna, my partner in the gang, had decided to go out and see her mother. When we arrived at her home, I had carelessly pulled out of the front of my dress a very valuable evening gown, which I had secreted in a hidden pocket. I had just placed it across the bed when Edna's two-year-old sister happened in the room. Her eyes fell upon it and she said:

" 'Oh, Miss Mabel, where did you buy such a beautiful dress?'

"Thoughtlessly, I answered, 'Kiddie, I didn't buy that; I just borrowed it from Mr. Wanamaker.'

" 'Borrowed it?' she queried. 'What do you mean? Does Mr. Wanamaker let people have such beautiful things to take home?'

" 'No, child, we don't pay for anything. We just rob the rich.' We thought it was such a good joke, Edna and I broke out laughing when Edna's mother called, 'Tillie, run to the store for Mama and get a loaf of bread for lunch.' The child backed out of the room in silence, her eyes seemed glued to the blue shiny silk lying before her.

"We thought no more of the affair until, a few minutes later, she came back from the store and put the bread on the table and came into the front room. Her face was

as white as flour. She was shaking like a frightened fawn.

"Suddenly from under her little red jacket she pulled out a glass of jelly. Holding it up before us, she said: 'See what I took from the rich grocery man.'

"That should have been our lesson, if ever a lesson was to be had. I had educated the child without thinking. We were both shocked. It struck us both at home. The terrible seed we had planted. Edna grabbed the glass and threw it out the window, and gave her sister a sound spanking, and then took her back to the store and made her pay the groceryman out of her little bank.

"When she came home, we asked her why she had done such a thing, and this was what she said: 'Well, you told me how you got the dress, and how you robbed the rich, and I guess I just got the habit from you.'

"You know Mr. Harris and Mr. Hanson, in the Bible it says, 'A little child shall lead them.' Yet in this case, it was them leading a little child. As for me not quitting, I guess I am like Tillie, I just got the habit. I got started wrong. I was not educated along the right line, but may the Good Lord some day see fit to give me enough will-power to break this habit, as I know now that if I continue, I will spend the balance of my time powdering my nose in front of a looking-glass in some big hotel kept up by the State."

Again, I say, in closing my chapter, this is just another example culled from everyday life, and which bears out my assertion, "Why Crime Does Not Pay."

## THE STOCKSDALE MURDER

THE instance I am going to tell you about, occurred some eighteen years ago while I was detailed at the Central Police Station as a news reporter for the Los Angeles Daily Journal.

I had just returned from a midnight lunch and reported over the phone to my city editor, Mr. Statts, that everything was as quiet as a mummy's tomb. He told me to keep awake and that there is always a lull before a storm. I answered that I kind of had the same feeling myself, and hung up the phone.

It is really strange, the hunches that come over one in this line of work. It seems almost uncanny as one sits in the stillness of the night and something seems to permeate the air, something that is about to break—a big story, perhaps. I have often wondered since the radio has come into its own if in those early days when I was a police reporter and had these feelings come over me, that a murder had been committed, or a big fire was about to break out, if it was not really after all that something you and I are now getting in the form of our present day radio.

Whatever it was, I had it that night as I hung up the phone. I strolled out of the reporters' room and over to the Detective Department where I found three detectives perched on their tilted chairs, leaning against the walls. A belated California rain was drizzling outside. Joe Rich was on the desk and was one of the old-timers around headquarters. His partner, Grant Roberds, was telling of some of his army experiences over in the Philip-



piners. I remember he was telling how the native Igorotes used to live on dog meat. I was much interested. It was the first time I had ever heard of human beings eating dogs, and was just about to ask him to tell me more about it when the tinkling of the phone bell interrupted our party.

"What's that?" asked Rich, "burglar—shooting—now. Just a minute, madam, don't get excited. Tell me quietly the address. You say someone is shot. Now the address——Wall St."

Rich turned to his partners, Detective Sergeants Hugh Dixon and Bert Cowan, and handed them a slip of paper with the address and said:

"Better get there in a hurry. The woman says something about a burglar and some shooting."

No autos in those days, so we ran to the patrol entrance and Tommy Rico whipped up the two gray horses into a gallop. The clanging of the bell gave us a clear right of way over the few cabbies and street cars that were still out in those early hours.

Upon arriving at the Wall Street address, we found the neighborhood quite alarmed. Some were looking out of their lighted windows, while others were standing, half-dressed, on the sidewalks staring into a frame cottage that gave out an impression of mystery; in fact, the haunted house of story-book days was not unlike this place.

We jumped out of the wagon and into the crowd and up the few front stairs of the house. The smell of cold powder smoke still perfumed the air inside. In the parlor, propped up in an old-fashioned chair sat a woman of about thirty. Her body was shaking with convulsion. Around her shoulders was thrown a blue and grey blanket. She was sobbing pitifully. I noticed her feet were bare, suggesting to my mind that she had just



jumped out of bed. An elderly woman was trying to comfort her and told us this young woman's husband had just been shot by a burglar and was in the room just off the hall.

We rushed to this room, which was in total darkness. Roberds struck a match as I looked for the electric light bracket. In the flickering shadows I saw the form of a man lying in bed, clutching in his stiffened fingers some of the coverings. By this time Cowan had turned on the light and Dixon stepped to a half-raised window that opened over a small cement walk, apparently leading to the rear of the house.

I saw Roberds pick up a small hand mirror from the dresser and hold it over the man's half opened mouth. I guessed that he was trying to see if life was yet in the body but he turned to us and said, "I guess he's gone, all right."

A crimson spot on his left breast plainly showed where the assassin's bullet had ended the life of this poor unfortunate. A hurried examination of the room disclosed no other clue that would lead to the possible identification of the murderer.

The coroner was notified and the body removed to an undertaking establishment. Roberds and Dixon talked to the wife who gave the name of—for the sake of the surviving members of her family and those of the dead man I will call her Mrs. Alberta Stocksdale. Between her muffled sobs, she said she had been awakened by the sound of some one raising the window of her bed room and there saw a man crawling in. She said she shook the sleeping form of her husband beside her and whispered in his ear to look, a burglar was getting in. She saw her husband half raise up in bed and call out, "What do you want?" Then there was a blinding flash and her husband groaned and fell back on the pillow

as he murmured, "Good-by, my dear, I am shot; and oh, how I love you so!"

She said she screamed and jumped from the bed and ran out of the house, falling in a swoon on the front lawn. She remembered nothing more until this kindly old lady had given her a glass of water.

Such was the story of her husband's death, except she said the burglar had fired from the window and that she had run out of the front door as he jumped back from the window and escaped.

Cowan again entered the death chamber and began pawing over the bed clothes. I saw him look up and call to Dixon. He whispered something I could not hear. He then went back into the kitchen and turned on a light and walked out of the open door into the night, around the house and re-entered by the front door. I saw him stop, however, and look into the bedroom window and measure the distance between the cement walk and the house, just under the window. The sidewalk was eight feet from the house at this point and a pansy bed was directly under the window. I knew he was looking for footprints of the murderer.

Upon entering the house, he asked the elderly lady if anyone besides her had been in the house since the shooting. She said no, and that she had been in the parlor all the time.

Another whispered conversation between the detectives, and Roberds asked the old lady if she would take the little wife into her house for the night and after stationing a uniformed officer at the death house with instructions not to let any one disturb a thing until he returned in the morning, Roberds motioned us to come on.

In the patrol wagon going back to the station, Roberds said, "Nick, what do you think of it?"

I, a cub reporter, said, "It's awful, Grant. And to

think of the terrible feeling that little wife must have had when her husband was shot beside her in that dark room, and when he cried out to her, 'Good-by, my dear, I am shot; and oh, how I love you!' I sure do pity her."

"Well, kid, don't lose any sympathy over her," he answered.

"What!" I said. "Don't pity her! How can you be so hard-hearted?" I shot back at him. "You Coppers get me all riled up."

I wondered if he was human.

"Listen, my lad," he said, "no burglar ever killed Stocksdale. In fact, just at this time, I think she did it herself or perhaps—" Here he left the sentence unfinished, except to say that he guessed he had said too much before me already.

I first looked at him, then at Dixon. I was trying to figure out his theory. What grounds had he to suspect that poor sobbing widow? Dixon was a very quiet fellow, and his six-foot-two frame only swayed back and forth with the movement of the wagon as it bumped over the unpaved streets.

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My story went into the paper as an account of a husband being killed in bed by a murderous burglar. It was well that I wrote it this way, as that was just what the detectives wanted. They didn't want me to spill even the slightest hint of their suspicions.

The coroner's inquest followed. The same story was told by the wife as she told it to us that fatal night. However, for the two days between the date of the murder and the coroner's inquest, I had never been able to get in touch with her. Cowan, Roberds and Dixon, where were they? This worried me. Perhaps they were working out their theory in their own way. Two days after the inquest, I saw Mrs. Stocksdale in one of the shops on



Broadway, attending a sale. Her eyes were not red now. She seemed a much different woman than when I saw her at the inquest such a short time before.

At the end of the store aisle, I saw Dixon and Roberds. Yes, they were watching her. They were not dressed the same. Different hats and clothes, and one wore spectacles. In fact, they looked altogether different. More like a couple of ranchers. I, myself, would not have known them were it not for the fact that I had seen them dressed this way once before when Captain Bradish had detailed them on a very mysterious case involving a murder.

I knew enough not to speak to them and they showed their appreciation later by telling me they would soon have a good story for me.

The seventh day after the murder, an arrest was made of a man who was booked on suspicion of murder. He would say nothing. Police grilling was of no avail.

Then followed the inevitable, as is always the case in crime and criminals. Mrs. Stocksdale heard of the arrest of this man and came to the station, she said, to identify, if possible, her husband's assassin. She said she had been sent for by the police. But the police had not sent for her at all. Roberds and Dixon knew why she came. She was afraid. Afraid the suspect had talked. She realized the end was near. The guilty conscience that lurks in the innermost souls of all criminals was tearing her heart from its fastenings.

Dixon and Roberds knew that she was worried over the powder marks on the purple quilt that covered her husband's bed. Cowan and Roberds knew she was worried over the lack of footprints in that little pansy bed under the death-chamber window. Dixon and Roberds knew she was worried over that back door being left opened. Yes, she suspected they knew all the truth,



because that same guilty conscience was still tearing at her heart, when she remembered that they asked her once about a clandestine lover; the eternal triangle. It was as old as the mountains she could see from the window of the detectives' office she was sitting in.

She had but one chance to save her neck. They would never hang a woman in California if she turned State's evidence. Her will power was broken when the clever man hunters, the protectors of our homes, shot this last question to her:

"Mrs. Stocksdale, do you remember your husband's last words, 'Good-by, my dear, I am shot; and oh, I love you so?'" Oh, those words of the trusting and dying husband!

That was the end. She broke into real tears and sobbed out the truth. She told of how she had been deceiving her husband; of how she had carried on these secret trysts with the suspect; and how, on the fatal night, they had planned to put the unsuspecting husband out of the way; and when he was asleep beside her, she had gotten up and let the murderous lover in the back door; and how she crept back into bed and her cowardly affinity had fired a bullet into the sleeping form, and then pulled up the window but had forgotten and went out the same way he came in.

I won't tell of the other things they forgot to do to cover up the crime, only to say the law of average was all against them, and when they have paid their penalties of man-made laws, they still must reckon with Him whose name our mothers have taught us to love and respect since childhood, because, after all, didn't she tell us that "Crime Does Not Pay"? I think she did.

## THE CALLING OF JOHNNY MAC RAY

THE sun in Southern California never seemed to shine more brightly than on the particular morning in April, when Johnny MacRay threw down his hoe in his father's orange grove, lying beneath the shadows of a small range of hills not far from that pretty little village of Glendora.

A California rain had but just cleared the atmosphere a few days before. The fragrance of orange blossoms filled the crisp air and the singing of the wild birds could be heard as they fluttered from limb to limb 'mid the new leaves of the tall eucalyptus trees that served as a wind break around the borders of this sun-kissed grove.

"Dad, I am done; I am through ranching," said this nineteen-year-old lad as he unbuttoned the collar of his blue denim shirt and started for the house. His father just shook his head and said:

"My boy, please don't leave. We need you here." But his son only kept going and when he met his mother at the back door of the rose-covered cottage, he only halted long enough to tell her he was going to the city.

His sister, a year younger, was in the midst of stirring up another of those chocolate-covered cakes that always brought the most tickets at the little church bazaars.

"Johnny, boy, why are you going, and leave us all alone?" she asked.

"Suzanna, I am going to the big city. I have read in books how men have been called to the wilds and out into the West, but day by day, as I work in the solitude of the ranch, I imagine I have heard the call of the city. I think they want me there. There, where I can make a mark in the world for myself. Yes, there where everyone has a chance. You know all the big men of to-day came from the farm, and that's why I am going."

Johnny's philosophy was good. True, it had been the making of many others who had gone before. Now let's see what fate in modern day had in store for him.

His best clothes were soon packed in a paper-covered suitcase and amid tear-stained faces about him, he braced himself for the parting, and lingering just long enough to listen to the farewell words of his mother, he sauntered down the road to the little red-painted station of the interurban electric.

As the screeching whistle of the on-coming train approached him, he glanced back at his home and there saw the forms of his people gathered beneath the big umbrella tree, he himself had helped plant at the entrance of the ranch some ten years before.

He fancied he could see them waving a last good-bye. He thought he could picture Don, the big black dog, trying to acknowledge his home leaving. Don had been his playfellow all his life. A thousand thoughts seemed to pass through his befuddled mind in these brief few seconds, only to be swept aside, as he thought of his advent into the big city of Los Angeles, he had so often visited with his parents at Fiesta times.

John was not unfamiliar with this city's streets. He knew the cars entered the big Pacific Electric depot at Sixth and Main, and that Spring Street was just a block west and Broadway was where all the big merchant princes had established the stores whose fame had



traveled from coast to coast. Perhaps it would be in one of these places he would get his start. Yet, he was unskilled in any of these lines, and he was just a bit backward in asking for a place.

His first thought was to get a room. Being unacquainted with the pitfalls and dangers of improper home surroundings, he secured a location in a cheap lodging house in the busy section of the city, because it was not very expensive, and started out to hew his career.

The only warnings he had received at home, were those he had had preached to him at the little church in Glendora. Perhaps they were not quite plain enough for a growing boy to understand. Perhaps he did not pay much attention to his minister when he was told of the dangers in a big city life. Or perhaps the minister had not foreseen the value of telling his young flock of the temptations, the filth and disease that lurk in the musty corners of every big city. Then again, even ministers, bred in the homes of refinement, do not themselves know of the things that confront the boy or girl, seeking to reach fame in one of these metropolises. Just so with Johnny MacRay.

\* \* \*

I will pass by the two short intervening years that followed, only to say that as time went on, Johnny's letters home became fewer and fewer.

About this time my office was called upon by one of the big corporations to make an investigation regarding a series of thefts taking place in several of their grocery stores, located in various parts of the city. Their invoices were always short. A complete system of robbery was going on in each of these stores.

The president of this corporation had personally called upon me many times. The losses were tremendous. He said he could not think that all of his man-



agers were crooks, but he wanted me to place an operative in as many stores as possible and try and find the "leak."

Week after week my agents worked hard and faithfully, but still no results. Each day their reports only seemed to baffle both the president and myself. All the employees who might be suspected were cleared by my agents, much to the satisfaction of the president, but still much to his chagrin. All the invoices from the big central warehouse had always checked with the merchandise that had been delivered to the various stores, yet the report of the firm's inspector who weekly checked the stores showed merchandise short.

It was surely distressing. Then fate, as in all cases of crime, played its master card. My agent, Robert Albert, picked it up, so to speak. For the sake of my readers and the protection of the public, I am not permitted here to state just what that card was, except to say that it led our trail back into the wholesale department. It involved the shipping clerk and a driver. While we were talking to the clerk, word was passed around the plant that detectives were busy, and the driver left his wagon, backed at the delivery entrance and departed. The clerk confessed to manipulating the records, and we recovered thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise he had stored in a little cabin on the outskirts of the city. But the driver was gone. His name was Johnny MacRay.

Oh, if this story could only end like all the movie scenarios do, but in this case I must tell its ending as it happened.

I sent one of my agents to this boy's home, as we had found some letters from his mother and sister, giving their address and which he had overlooked in a bureau drawer in his room when he took his hasty flight. My

agent was able to secure a position on the ranch in the hope of getting some line on the boy's whereabouts.

One day a letter came from San Francisco, addressed, General Delivery. It was from Johnny. One of my agents and I left immediately for the big city to work with the Police Department there. Our vigil had been kept at the postoffice for several days, when I was notified that a young chap was arrested in one of the smaller bay cities and they thought it might be our man.

Accompanied by one of the city detectives, we went to this town and were admitted into the cell of the suspect. Yes, it was Johnny, Johnny who had left that pretty little orange grove a few years before. The strangest part of our meeting was, he called me by name. I guess I was more startled than he because no one except the officers had known that I was working on the case, and to my knowledge I had never met Johnny before.

"Well, my lad, where did you ever meet me?" I asked.

"That's what hurts, Mr. Harris; that's what hurts," he answered. "You used to live on a ranch at Charter Oak, and I knew your brother and mother very well. After you left to go to the big city, I had seen you many times in Los Angeles and was tempted to come and give myself up after I got in so strong on this deal. And the day you came and talked with Richards, our shipping clerk, I saw you and knew then that the firm had hired detectives and our game was about ended. I just didn't have the nerve to face the music and left."

He also told me that the two years after he left the ranch were filled with bad luck. He said he, being a stranger in the town, could not get work and fell into hanging around the pool halls and one day he had met Richards, and told him he was out of work and

hungry. It was then that Richards got him a job driving the big wholesale wagon and finally propositioned him about robbing the firm. He said there wasn't a chance to lose, as he had charge of the records of all the stuff going out to the stores and he had rented a place where he could plant the goods, and after they secured enough merchandise, they would go to a small town and open a store of their own.

"You know, Mr. Harris, it all looked so good to me that I just fell for the plan from the start. Do you know, that since I have been a fugitive, I have tried to figure it all out. If I had only got a room in some Christian family and gone to church like I used to in Glendora, perhaps I would not have met Richards and would have lived a different life."

"Yes, Johnny, but think now, what will your daddy and mother and Suzanna think when you go back?"

"Yes, Nick," he answered, "that's what's hurting me now. Because, Nick, I am not going back. I can't face those folks. I can't even play with Don. I am not good enough. I am not going back," he said, as I shook hands with him and told him we would start in the morning.

On our way back to San Francisco to get our grips for our homecoming, I couldn't quite figure just what he meant. As we crossed the bay, I wondered what was on his mind when he said he was not going back. It worried me all that night.

Next morning early, my assistant and I left on the first ferry for Oakland and to the little town in which he was confined in jail. I seemed to have an evil presentiment that things were not right somehow. Perhaps he had escaped and left us to start all over again.

The atmosphere around the jail seemed different that morning as we entered, and I felt that something had happened.



The jailer greeted us friendly enough, but his fatherly appearance seemed changed. I even pictured large tears in his eyes as he said: "Harris, your boy has gone. He hung himself in the cell last night, but left this note to you."

I took the slip of torn paper. It read as follows:

*"Mr. Harris, I told you I was not going back.  
Please tell Ma and Dad and Suzanna to forgive  
their Johnny. Tell them I didn't make good.  
(Signed) "Johnny MacRay."*

Lots more could be written here about the suffering and misery poor Johnny brought upon the home of his loved ones; but that is not pleasant reading, and so I will close this chapter from life by saying, such was the calling of Johnny MacRay. It is just another reason I think, 'Why Crime Does Not Pay.'

## THE SECRET CIPHER

THERE is an intense popular interest in ciphers—secret codes, underground methods of communication by letters, figures or symbols. Entangled with the romances of boyhood are the mysterious carvings on trees, chalk marks on the barn door, cabalistic designs scribbled on paper, that meant anything from the first calf-hood love affair to a youthful Black Hand threat.

Grown-ups, being after all but children with wider vision and greater experience, still cling to the mystery of ciphers. With what avid attention we “eat up” a cipher mystery story! How, during the war, we all scanned personal notices in the daily newspapers, reading between the simple words of meaningless import, fresh German plots with each day’s passing. And how, now, we live the mystery of them still!

The story of Billy Shane is the story of a secret cipher code. His name is not truly Billy Shane, but we will call him so here, for he has paid the price for what he did and he merits the chance he is taking of getting back square with himself again. I shall tell the incident as it happened—the queer chapter of loyalty that blossomed out of Shane’s nature amid the weeds of his erratic actions.

It is apropos that the Shane story be told now. There is much in it that resembles the Roy Gardner story. Shane was a bank robber. Gardner is a train bandit. Both, however, had wives that stood by them to the end, that believed in them, that bent every energy of their lives to saving the husbands with whom they had thrown their lot. And, more important, especially in the Shane

case, both had little girls in whom the whole world centered.

This, then, is one of the psychologic and psychopathic tragedies of the world of crime—the spectacle of a good husband and father going wrong. There seems more of a medical than a legal reason for it. Some day the state, wise in many ways and stupid in others, will work out a remedy. It is certain that the penitentiary does not meet the issue. Shane and Gardner are the evidences of it.

Shane was a cashier in a small town bank in the middle west. He came there with his wife and a year-old baby at a time when a boom was just beginning. He secured employment as a bookkeeper for a grain company, whose head was one of the directors of the bank. This director later became the bank's head and with the change in bank personnel which naturally accompanied his accession, Shane was moved into the bank on account of his dependable qualities.



Billie Shane was cashier in the bank.



This was in July of the second year. Shane was doing well then, financially speaking. But the head of the bank had taken a fancy to him, as Shane learned late one afternoon when he called him into the ornately furnished office for a quiet talk.

"We have been thinking of putting you in Olmstead's place as second vice-president, Shane," the president said. "Of course this is pretty rapid advancement for a young man. I am trusting to your common sense and intelligence not to get carried away with this. We like you, and we appreciate your management of the bank's affairs. You will be responsible for the deposit boxes and the important business transactions in which the bank is personally interested."

Shane went home walking on air that night. Little Ruth, now nearly 3 years old, met him at the door. He swung her high on his shoulder and kissed her.

"Where's mumsy?" he asked. "Let's find mumsy. I've got some big news for her \* \* \* \* \*"

"Mumsy" was overjoyed with Shane's promotion.

"Oh, Billy," she said, "now I can have a real home and \* \* \* and things \* \* \*"

They sat long before the fire that night, Shane stroking his wife's hair as she nestled against him, and planning for the future. They had had a long pull since her marriage to a penniless bookkeeper, with nothing but her woman's faith for a balance wheel. Now it seemed that the long, hard pull was over and there was to be sunshine ahead.

At 10 o'clock Shane glanced at his watch and stood up.

"I've got to run back to the bank and do some work on the books," he said abruptly. "You run along to bed and I'll be in later \* \* \*"

He leaned over little Ruth's crib and kissed her tenderly. Then he patted his wife on the shoulder and

went out into the night, leaving "mumsy's" eyes tender with love and gratitude for the reward that had come to her "big boy."

Shane went directly to the bank. He let himself in with a pass-key, turning on the light over the cashier's cage. The night watchman, Tom Masson, saw the light on his rounds and peered into the bank. He saw Shane busy over the books and went his way. It was nothing for Shane to be working late.

At midnight Shane opened a drawer in his desk and from it he took a strange package wrapped in canvas. The night watchman was at the far end of town, as Shane well knew. The rest of the place was asleep. There would be no one to disturb him. With careful deliberation, he unrolled the canvas and took out a first-class safe-cracking outfit. With the sureness of an expert he put-tied up the crack in the door, leaving a tiny canal at the top.

Into this canal he poured a dark, viscous liquid from a glass tube which terminated in a rubber bulb. Then he tucked a fuse into the aperture. This done, he ripped up the carpet from the president's office, rolled it into a bundle and placed it in front of the door. With the stage all set, he carefully pulled down the shades over the big plate glass windows that looked out over the main street, and touched off the blast.

The door burst out with a muffled roar, and bounced on the roll of carpet. The concussion was heard in various parts of town. But in the hills, above the town there was a rock quarry which frequently shot off blasts at night. Those householders who heard the wrecking of the Citizen's National bank vault listened for a moment, grunted and turned over and went back to sleep. They had no reason to be suspicious.

Shane opened the rear door of the bank and switched

on the electric fan. Within a few moments the smoke had been cleared out. With the same careful deliberation that had characterized his every movement, he opened the safe deposit boxes one by one and sorted the contents. He took only coin and currency, stacking it in neat little piles and packages on the cashier's counter. When it was all done, he scooped the money into a brown leather grip, such as doctors carry, ran up the curtains, snapped out the light, and with his overcoat turned up about his ears and the grip in his hand, crossed the street and turned the corner into a garage run by a man named Williams.

Shane knew that Williams slept in the place. He knocked for some time and finally aroused him.

"I've got to get a train from R— junction in the morning," he said. "I want to rent a machine. I'll send it back by a boy."

Williams knew Shane intimately. The transaction was arranged without difficulty. Williams brought out a fast roadster and filled its tanks.

"Somebody ill?" he asked.

"No," said Shane shortly. "It's bank business. I want to get to the city and back by noon, if I can."

The explanation sounded plausible. Williams started the engine. Shane jumped in and swung out into the main street. Williams locked up and went back to bed, grumbling to himself about cashiers that pulled men out of bed in the middle of the night—1 o'clock to be exact—on a crazy deal.

The city express pulled through R— junction at 2:02 a. m. Shane boarded it and took a seat in the smoker. Nearly everyone was asleep, men dozing with their hats over their eyes. In one corner a poker game was in progress, the players holding a board across their knees. Shane flipped the brown leather grip under his seat and



settled down. After a bit he lighted a cigar, smoking it thoughtfully \* \* \*

The fare to the city was \$12.60. Shane felt in his pockets as the conductor paused alongside of him. He had only a \$10 bill. He went through all his pockets. Then he remembered the grip. He stooped over and fumbled with the catch. As the grip came open, the light from one of the swaying train lights struck squarely in it. The conductor's eyes widened, as he noted the heap of gold and currency.

Shane, with his body bent over the grip, slipped out a \$10 bill and closed the grip. When he looked up the conductor was counting his tickets nonchalantly, his eyes on his work. Shane sighed with relief. He had not seen. He passed up the bill. The conductor felt in his pockets and returned the change. Then he stuck a ticket in Shane's hat and went his way.

At the door of the car, he turned slowly and looked back, his eyes half-closed. Shane was slumped down in his seat, looking out of the window.

The train was on time to the minute. As it pulled into the central station, Shane gathered up his belongings—his coat and his grip. With his overcoat over his arm he sauntered through the hurrying crowds toward the exit gates; two strangers detached themselves from the crowd and blocked his way.

"Just a minute," said one of them, fixing Shane with a keen eye. "We want to talk to you."

Shane looked them over coolly. They had "detective" written all over them.

"Yes?" he queried politely.

"We are from the central station—police headquarters," said the first speaker, showing his star. "We'd like to know what you have in that grip."

Shane shifted his overcoat and looked them over.



Detective Thos. McAnnay said, "I want to speak to you."

"That," he said, "is my business. I don't know why I should be held up here by a couple of policemen."

"It may be your business and then again it may be ours," said Detective Thos. McAnnay smoothly. "If you are all right—nothing wrong and all that—you certainly will not object to answering a few questions. We have to do these things you know."

Shane hesitated. Then he smiled.

"Certainly, certainly," he said. "I understand. I beg your pardon. I suppose you fellows are never sure."

"That's it, exactly," said McAnnay. "Now . . ."

Shane brought out a leather card case and extracted from it a card bearing his name and business as cashier of the Citizens National bank.

"I have a lot of money with me," he said, ingeniously, "though how the devil you fellows know it, is a mystery. Some \$20,000 in all. I ran down here to close



out a deal with the First National . . . I have other credentials, if you desire them."

Detective McAnnay studied the card.

"Well," he said, "this looks all right, and we don't doubt but that you have \$20,000 with you or that you are down here on business. But—does the bank know about it?"

Something in Shane's face shifted, changed, transformed. It was too subtle for analysis, yet delicate as it was, it registered on the detective's sixth sense and told him that his shot had gone home. He played again.

"You see, Shane," he said evenly, "a cashier doesn't usually come bounding in here at 5 o'clock in the morning with \$20,000 in a grip unless he's a damned fool. He'd travel in daylight—with that on him, if it was official business, wouldn't he?"

"Not necessarily," he replied. "I want to get back by noon. I had to leave early to make connections. It's going to hurry me as it is . . ."

"The First National doesn't open until 10 o'clock," said Detective McAnnay quietly. "How did you figure on spending the hours in between, Mr. Shane?"

Something in the way he said Mr. Shane broke through the cashier's control. The blood surged into his face.

"See here," he said, "I've stood about all of this I am going to. I tried to be a gentleman and give you information . . ."

"I beg your pardon," put in McAnnay, "that is exactly what you have not done. You haven't answered my question yet. Does the bank know about this trip?"

Shane tried to meet his eyes. He was naturally a truthful man. He managed it for an instant, but before the other's steady, suspicious scrutiny, he broke away,



and the blood slowly left his face. Detective McAnnay slowly nodded.

"You see, Shane," he said slowly, "it can't be done. You can't bluff it out. It'll only make it harder for you, boy, to try it. Believe me. I've been in the game a long time. It will be a whole lot better for you to unload than play a lone hand against fate. You've failed and it might be well to face the issue."

Something in the quiet, certain way in which he said it reached Shane as nothing else had. He stood for a moment with the lights of the city blurring into the smokiness of the early dawn, trying to think rapidly, and developing only chaos from the process. Finally his eyes fell upon the grip and the full force of what he had done came home to him. He turned out his hands with a little gesture of helplessness.

"I guess you're right," he said. "Let's have it over."

Detective McAnnay picked up the grip. His partner, Detective Thomas Burley, stepped to the other side of Shane. With the cashier between them they walked over to a taxi and climbed inside.

"Police headquarters," said McAnnay, showing his star to the driver.

Fifteen minutes later Shane was in a cell and McAnnay was upstairs in conference with the captain of detectives, with a brown leather grip containing \$20,000 in money and currency between them.

"There's no robbery reported as yet," said the chief. "The only thing we can do is to wait a couple of hours, I guess, and see what develops. You can't get him to talk?"

"Not a word," the detective replied. "Shut up like a clam when we pinched him and he's been closed ever since. By the way, how did you get the tip on him?"

The captain of detectives flipped a telegram across the desk.

"The conductor on the express," he said. "He used to work under me here in the bureau before he took up railroading. He's always Johnny-on-the-spot. He got a flash at the inside of this grip when the guy was buying a ticket: Thought it funny he'd get on at R— Junction with a wad like this, and slipped me a wire on a chance . . ."

"Can you beat it?" said Detective McAnnay, fingering the yellow blank. "Did you ever know it to fail? They plan it all out as carefully as hell, and something they didn't figure on trips 'em up."

"Every time," said the captain. "Every time. Better eat and come back. I may have something by that time."

When Detective McAnnay returned it was to find that Billy Shane, the trusted cashier of the Citizens National bank in a small town, was badly wanted for the unexplained robbery of the vaults of the bank in which he was just made an official. The captain had had a talk with the president of the bank over the long distance telephone and was pretty well informed as to what had occurred.

"Bring Shane in," he said, "and let's get to the bottom of this."

The cashier presented a pitiable spectacle when he was brought into the office of the captain of detectives for his official grilling. His hair was rumpled, his tie awry, and there were indications that he had been crying. His usual debonair appearance was gone and he looked like a man in the last throes of despair. They sat him down where the light from an east window would shine in his face, and began the arduous task of securing a confession.



"Tell me, 'Billy,' why did you do it?"

But in this they were balked—absolutely and entirely—for in the few hours Shane had been left to himself to work out his position, and understand his situation, he had made up his mind. He flatly refused to answer their questions. Threats, cajoleries, arguments, availed them nothing. He was obdurate. Finally the captain gave it up.

"Let the sheriff come and get him, he's the most obstinate mule I ever saw."

And so Billy Shane went home—back to the little town where he had been trusted and liked, back to "Mumsy" and baby Ruth and the boys at the bank. He came back with his head down, with a crimson, shamed look on his face, his hands working together spasmodically. Ahead was a long gray vista of years in the state penitentiary, with no hope of escape and no chance of



redemption. He had robbed and he must pay. Such was the law.

The meeting of Billy and his wife and baby Ruth will be passed over. These are not pleasant to read or contemplate. Only one—"Mumsy"—saw in his face something that the others missed—something that wrung her heart as nothing else could have done, it was a queer baffled expression of puzzlement \* \* \* she clutched him by the shoulders.

"Boy," she said, "just tell me one thing. I'm going to stick . . . only tell me, why did you do it?"

Billy Shane, bank robber, raised his head and looked into the eyes of the woman he loved most in all the world. In his face there was something of sheer wonderment she could not read—something that he himself could not understand.

"Kit," he said, "I—I don't know. I've tried to answer that question to myself up there in jail, and I couldn't. I don't know. I don't know. God knows I'd like to know."

He buried his face in her hair and the sheriff turned away with a lump in his throat, while they cried together—with little Ruth clinging big-eyed to "Daddy's" coat and not understanding it all any better than the rest of them.

And so Billy Shane went to the penitentiary—ten years was the sentence. He went out of the lives of "mumsy" and baby Ruth, shackled to a deputy sheriff. To her dying day "Mumsy" will never forget the look in his face—the dumb, mute appeal that he gave her as the doors of the courthouse closed behind him and shut him out of her life. There was behind it all a big, unanswered question—a question that many a poor devil has tried to answer and has never been able to:

"Why, oh, why did I do it?"

There were long hard days after that. "Mumsy" was left all alone with baby Ruth on her hands. She had to find work, and that had to be accomplished in the city. For in the little town where they had lived, she was a convict's wife, but in the city she was nobody. And nobodies can exist in the cities if they are not too particular.

Billy Shane, known as a number entity now on penitentiary records, wrote often to them both. His letters were always cheerful and hopeful.

"I am doing fine now," he said in one of them. "They have made me a trusty . . . Love and kisses to little Ruth. Buy her a big teddy bear and tell her Daddy sent it. Please don't let her forget me."

The first page of love and kisses was never sent. Prison authorities are weary of blank white pages covered with crosses. "Mumsy" came one day to see Billy, and for the first time learned that the letter had been rifled. She went to the warden, sobbing.

"Oh, if you only knew what that would mean to little Ruth," she said. "That's all she has of her daddy—those kisses. I can't bring her here—to see him."

The warden had a couple of children of his own. His heart was touched.

"All right," he said, and straightway issued orders that Billy Shane's page of kisses to little Ruth could be sent with his regular letters to his wife.

Thereafter prison censors smiled when they studied the letters from No. 56,789. There was always a blank white page there—"kisses for baby Ruth"—they tucked them back carefully in the envelope, resealed as is the prison custom, and dropped it in the mail box.

So matters went for a month, two months. And then one day—shortly after a visit of "Mumsy" to Billy Shane—a visit from which she came away bright-eyed

and a little flushed—something happened to disturb the even tenor of the penitentiary routine. There was a sensational prison break, and Billy Shane, No. 56,789, was the one who got away.

How he managed it was shown clearly when the corridor guard, missing him at morning roll-call, entered his cell and found the bars filed neatly through and his bedding knotted in a rope. The discovery was made only after Shane had been gone several hours, but the dragnet went out just the same. He was fingerprinted and photographed and the police departments all over the country only had to turn to a card index to meet him face to face, staring up at them.

Somewhere near a thousand detectives started looking for Billy Shane. The warden bethought him at once of "Mumsy." He got the city department on the long distance.

"Better watch her," he suggested. "Shane was always strong for his wife and kid. He'll connect with them sooner or later."

Two detectives hurried up to the address the warden had given—a cheap lodging house in the poorer district of the city. There they found the dark, poorly ventilated rooms which "Mumsy" occupied with little Ruth. A woman across the hallway cared for the child during the day while "Mumsy" was at work. At night she heard them romping together.

But—"Mumsy" too, had flown, and with her went little Ruth. The detectives found nothing in the room but evidence of a hasty departure—and a few blank, white sheets scattered here and there on the floor. One of the detectives gathered these up and took them along to the captain. It was all they had for a clue.

"Carefully prearranged," said the captain, when they told him of their findings. "Let's see those sheets."



They laid them out on the captain's desk—half a dozen soiled papers, marked with crosses in lead pencil—"Kisses for baby Ruth," inscribed in Shane's handwriting. The captain and his men humped over them, trying to make out a code or a cipher of some kind. Finally the captain sank back.

"I guess they are what they seem to be," he said, "but I am not satisfied."

He called in a handwriting expert. The expert thumbed his nose and held the papers up to the light. Then he struck a match and held it under the sheet nearest his hand. The others watched him in fascination. Slowly, like a dream materializing into a reality, carefully drawn brown letters began to show on the paper.

" . . . a small file, and smuggle it in when you come next time. God help me—it is my chance to get away from this hell and start a new life. I know you will come."

These were the words that came out under the influence of the heat. The handwriting man looked up. "Lemon juice," he said. "He wrote in lemon juice with a wooden toothpick. Heat brings it out. It fades after a bit and the paper turns white again."

So this was the answer. They heated the other sheets, and the whole thing became as clear as crystal. "Mumsy," always loyal, always clinging to the faith that she had placed in her "big boy," had received his secret messages in the innocent appearing pages that carried "Kisses for Baby Ruth." It was so simple it was elemental. It was she, of course, who had brought him the file with which he had engineered the escape. One sheet contained the trysting place:

" . . . steamer on the 10th for South America . . . "

That was all. With the riddle solved, the captain

jumped to action. But he was too late. The steamer had left. And it carried no wireless, for in those days the radio had not come into its own. And somewhere, southbound on the Atlantic, were Billy Shane and "Mumsy" and Baby Ruth, striking out like pioneers of the early days, into a new country for the beginning of a new life.

It may be said this is all wrong—that Billy Shane should have paid the penalty for his misdeed. But should he? That is a big question and one that the world is trying hard to answer to itself right now. Billy Shane was not correctly balanced. He was subnormal. He was a riddle even to himself. Under different conditions, different environment, and changed climate, might he not develop into a valuable, useful citizen? The world will say—no. The world is wrong.

Billy Shane today is a big character in South America. That is why I am not using his true name. But Shane's true name comes in over the southern cables now and then, attached to big enterprises. He has made good. He has squared his account with life. He has mended the weak link that snapped back there in a little country town with \$20,000 in bank money within reach of his fingers, and has become a powerful, strong citizen.

And right now, the bank that prosecuted him would be proud to shake his hand, for it, too, learned the lesson which every big institution has to learn—that, where human elements are concerned and where big strains are imposed, it is best not to place temptation loosely and carelessly where the weak links ride. This is a good rule of financial mechanics.

I will not say that I am glad Billy Shane escaped from jail, escaped the long prison term, any more than I am willing to say that I am glad Roy Gardner escaped. But I do say this: That by so doing, Billy Shane has turned

himself into a useful, honest, fair-playing citizen. Would he have become that had he remained in jail for the ten years to which he was sentenced?

The answer lies with you.



## CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

IT was in late October. The night was rainy. An early storm had swept down on the city, plucking the telephone wires into a wailing frenzy and screaming madly around corners. Indoors, with a comfortable fire between us, we discounted the storm over a humidor, and talked of many things.

"Circumstantial evidence—" I began.

"Is the bunk," supplemented Jimmy the Rat.

He leaned forward and tapped the table with a lean forefinger—a forefinger that was as sensitive to the thrill of a falling tumbler as a watchmaker's finger, to the twist



Indoors, over a humidor, we discounted the storm and talked of many things.

of a cam. In the firelight, his lean, gaunt face grew suddenly haggard. Into his eyes came a glint of something almost forgotten—some past memory that refused to down.

“You—”

He nodded.

“I know,” he said, “better than—you do.”

There was something in the way Jimmy spoke that made me halt my remark, leaving it unfinished. Jimmy and I often talked together in the evenings. Jimmy had “gone good” as the saying is—reformed. In the years that I had followed the detective game, dipping deep into life from the dark and seamy side, I had more than once found Jimmy right. There are some phases of life that a professional burglar knows better than any other. So I waited.

“Ever hear of the Camison murder?” asked Jimmy, suddenly.

I pondered. There was a certain vague familiarity about the name, Camison. Ah! I had it—Charles Camison—a banker. Of course, that is not the right name. The true name is something like that. For our purpose here, Camison will do.

“I recall it slightly,” I said. “Let’s see—he was—”

Jimmy the Rat held up his hand.

“Don’t spoil it,” he said. “Let me tell it.”

He rolled one of his eternal cigarettes. I sank back in my chair and prepared for a thrill. When Jimmy talked, I usually got a new angle on people, things—on crime itself, frequently on the inside of cases that had puzzled me. Jimmy was a blank under cross examination or questioning of any kind. But left to himself, with the circumstances right—

“It was a night like this,” he said, waving his cigarette toward the outer darkness and storm. “Old man Cami-



son, if you will go back, had a handsome shack up on Terrain boulevard—in the thirties, I believe. I had had my eye on that joint for some time—a swell, three storied place all decked out in Moorish settings, with a flock of flunkies and a million bucks worth of gardens. Do you remember it?”

I did distinctly—better than Jimmy knew. In my early days as a “dick” I had been detailed to guard a mass of expensive wedding presents when old Camison’s daughter was married. On that occasion I carried away a very definite impression of a succession of elaborately furnished rooms, ornate halls, over-embossed niches and a general prodigality of equipment that characterized the newer order of quickly acquired riches, developed through the medium of oil lands.

“Well,” Jimmy continued. “I waited for a good night. I knew there was some fine pickings in there—cut glass, silver and maybe a sparkler or two laying around loose on the dressers. When the rain moved in, so did I—after two days getting the run of the joint and piping off the night hack (night-watchman) and the time he rung in from a garage in the rear of the place.”

He smiled and squinted at the fire over the end of his cigarette and I could see that the vision he was conjuring up had at least one pleasant element in it.

“The cop on the beat,” Jimmy went on, “hit the corner at midnight. The night hack went off for lunch at that hour and came back at 12:30. In that half hour I figured I could scuff the joint, pick up whatever was loose, and beat it. I knew there was a safe there but I wasn’t tapping boxes in those days, so that didn’t worry me any.

“The lights went out at 10.

“As I figure it now, some downstairs servant had turned in. I stamped around in the rain under a tree at the corner of the grounds, waiting for midnight to come



along. About 11 o'clock a machine slid into the drive and old man Camison got out. He opened the door with a latch key and showed himself upstairs. I could follow him by the lights. The car parked in the garage and I guess the driver went to bed there.

"At 12 o'clock, the night hack and the cop walked down the street together. It took me two seconds to cross that lawn to a conservatory window I had spotted, and another two to slip a jimmy under the catch on the French shutters and get inside. I pulled the shutters together but left them unfastened for a quick get away. Then I looked the joint over."

The house as Jimmy described it was clear cut and sharp, like a bit of scenery illuminated by a flash of lightning. Knowing Jimmy's habits I could see him, in my mind's eye, studying the "lay" of the house with his electric torch shaded with a bit of perforated tape which he always used. That tape was Jimmy's own idea—a tiny hole—just big enough to provide a stray beam through the center, and all the rest in darkness.

"The silver was a cinch," Jimmy was talking again. "They had it all out on the sideboard. Being Camison's house, I didn't have to do any sorting. I knew it was genuine, even before I hefted it. I took a tablecloth off a small stand, piled the whole business into the center and gathered up the four corners. There was a bunch of gold filigree dessert spoons on a shelf—a fancy little handout, and I shoved those into my pocket."

He stopped and his face grew hard as he flipped the stub of his cigarette into the fire and watched it curl into a glowing ember.

"I was just about to back out of the place—to make a good, clean get away," he said, "when something happened. You know how it is—when you are on the job—your nerves get kind of keyed up. You hear things and

then again you don't hear 'em. Get me? Standing there beside that heap of silver that would have put me on easy street when I got it hooked, I heard something.

"It sounded like a thud—like somebody had dropped something. I didn't hear anything else, just that. It might have been a servant jumping out of bed in his bare feet, or something dropped somewhere upstairs—something ran up my spine and my impulse was to run. At that I might have stuck it out but a blamed clock in the hall struck once.

"Now I found out afterward that the clock was fast—nearly 20 minutes fast. It was about 10 minutes past 12 when that clock struck, as a matter of fact, but you see, I didn't know that. I thought I had taken longer than I figured. I remembered that the watchman got back at 12:30 to the minute, and I saw myself walking into a trap."

He shifted in his chair and lighted a fresh cigarette.

"Well," he said, "we all lose our nerve some time. I lost mine right there. I had planned the whole business so carefully that when I thought I had fumbled on the time, my only thought was to get away. You won't believe it, Nick, but I beat it out of there and left that silver lying on the floor. I was in what a Britisher calls a 'blue funk' I guess." On the outside the storm bit down with icy teeth into the city's canyons and swirled the sleet into forgotten corners with chilling emphasis. Jimmy the Rat shivered and moved closer to the fire.

"Well, the little Old Bad Luck Jinx must have been on my trail that night," he went on. "The night hack was just coming up the front walk as I slid out of the window. I waited until he turned the corner of the house and scooted for the sidewalk across the lawn. Just as I hit the level a big harness bull that was standing





"Hello, Jimmy! Back at the old game, eh?"

behind a palm not three feet away, reached out a paw and nailed me by the neck and spun me around.

" 'Hello, Jimmy,' he said, as the light from the arc on the corner hit me in the face. 'Back at the old game again, eh?'

"You see, he knew me for doing a stretch in the big house a couple of years before. And he was on to my game. He gives me a wise look and takes a squint at the house. Then he remembers the watchman.

" 'Huh,' he says, 'got scared out, didn't you, Jimmy?'

" 'Yes,' I said, brave as a lion, 'and before I got in, too. Can you beat that for rotten luck?'

"As I said, he was a wise looking cop. And he was wise, too, as wise as he looked.

" 'That remains to be seen, Jimmy,' he says, nice and



quiet, and right there I knew it was no use to try to kid him out of it.

"Well, he marched me down to the box and from there to headquarters in the wagon. I was feeling as cocked as a squirrel in Central Park when they took me into the frisking room. I thought of that silver lying back there on the floor of old man Camison's house, and I began to laugh."

A grim smile flickered for an instant on Jimmy the Rat's face as he thought of the scene. Then—

"Well, I didn't smile long. A dick ran his hand down in my pocket and out came those gold filigree spoons—the ones I had shoved into my coat and forgotten. He spread them out in his hand and held them in front of my eyes so I could see them. I took one look and right there I knew my goose was cooked."

Jimmy the Rat leaned forward and stirred the fire into life, sending a shower of sparks scurrying up the chimney.

"That was about 1:30 a. m.," he went on. "They mugged me and put me in a cell and I climbed in between the blankets, glad to get some sleep. It had been cold work, standing out there in the rain shadowing old Camison's house. Anyway, a jail was more or less comfortable with a blizzard coming up and the thermometer away down in the basement.

"It was about dawn—maybe a short time before—I don't remember now, I was awakened by a light shining in my face. I opened my eyes. There were three dicks standing alongside my bunk.

" 'Get up, Jimmy,' says 'Big Dave,' Scanlan, one of them. 'We want to talk to you about a little job you did.'

"I gave 'em a mean look.

" 'For the love of Mike,' I said. 'Can't you wait till

morning? You know I cleaned the joint. What's the idea of pulling me out of bed on that. You got the stuff.'

"Big Dave shook his head and his eyes never left my face.

" 'It ain't the robbery we're talking about, Jimmy,' he said. 'It's that other matter.'

"Well, Nick, that brought me up on both feet. I haven't been trailing underground without knowing when something's in the wind. I gave Dave the once over.

" 'Spit it out, Dave!' I says. 'I don't get your drift.'

" 'I'm talking about Camison—about the murder. You know about it, don't you, Jimmy?' "

Jimmy the Rat leaned forward, his face tense.

"Say," he asked, "did you ever get hit in the solar plexus? Right smack in the core? You try to shut your mouth and you can't. Everything goes up and down in waves. Well, that is the way I felt at that moment. Old Camison croaked!

" 'Dave,' I said, 'you got me dead wrong. If old Camison's been snuffed, it's not on me. I never croaked a guy in my life and you know it.' I got scared out—right there something hit me. It was the memory of that funny sound that I had heard—the sound that had frightened me. Dave was watching me like a hawk.

" 'Come on, kid,' he said. 'We know you didn't do it. You never had the nerve. But who was your pal?' "

Jimmy the Rat twisted around in his chair. His face was suddenly drawn and haggard.

"Well, that was the lay of the case. Dave worked on me, and so did the rest of 'em. They were sure I had a pal who had croaked the old millionaire while I was cleaning up the loot. All the talking I could do didn't help me any. They stopped about 8 o'clock and I spent two hours of hell after being questioned, talked to, grilled,

and put through a cross examination that would have turned me against my own mother.

"At noon I sent for a dick I had seen walking in the corridor.

"I found out afterward he was captain of the dick bureau. There was something about him I liked. You know what I mean—he had a square face. I didn't think much of any of 'em, but I knew instinctively I could trust him. He came in smiling.

" 'Well, Jimmy,' he said, 'going to come through?'

" 'No,' I said, 'I ain't got nothing to come through with. But I'm going to tell you something.'

"He sat down on the edge of the cot and rolled a cigarette while I made my spiel. I told him the whole works from beginning to end—just how I got in, what I was trying to do, and all. Then I told him about the noise upstairs—that funny thud. He listened without a word. When I had finished he got up.

" 'All right, Jimmy,' he said. 'I'll give it the once over. If you're lying it isn't going to do you any good. If you are telling the truth, we'll find it out.'

"That was all. He took me on my face value. He didn't ask any questions. He knew when I sent for him I wanted him to get me just that way, for whatever you can say about it, a dick has a hunch just as often as other folks—provided he is a good dick, and this hombre was.

"What he dug up I never knew. He came back in a couple of hours and stuck his head in the cell.

" 'I checked up on that matter,' he said, 'and I guess we won't hang the murder on you yet, Jimmy. But it was darned close.' "

Jimmy the Rat sank back in his chair and waved his hands with a gesture that might have meant many things.

"That's about all there is to it," he said. "They slipped me a term in the big house on the spoons and



never a word about the murder. I've often wondered what he dug up there that wiped up the slate of that. As I see it they could have tied the murder on me just as easy—that's circumstantial evidence."

The wind was howling now with the full strength of an eastern blizzard. Windows rattled and buzzed in the casements and the screams of the wires had risen to a screech. Neither of us, however, was interested in the climate. My own mind was traveling back—skipping days and weeks and months like a beam of light. It went back to a night similar to this one, when Captain Martin Riley, then head of the city's detective bureau, had asked me to go with him.

"Jimmy," I said abruptly, "would you like to hear the rest of that story—of the Camison murder?"

Jimmy's mouth flew open.

"You—were in on that?"

"I guess I was the one that cleared you, Jimmy," I replied.

"I never knew who it was, but I remember Riley told me at the time what I had done would save a man's neck from stretching.

"Man," said Jimmy the Rat, "I'd give my eye teeth to know that. When I came out of the big house Riley was dead and none of the others knew the real inside—"

And so, sitting before the comfortable glow of the log fire, I told Jimmy the Rat the finale of his own story—the last chapter that he had never heard—the dramatic end of Camison the millionaire.

"Riley and I went up to the Camison house," I told him. "By special orders the coroner had left him just where he fell. He was lying face downward in the bathroom—"

"With his throat cut," interrupted Jimmy the Rat.

"Yes," I said, "with his throat cut, Jimmy. Riley

and I looked around. He was dressed in a bathrobe. His shaving things were laid out on the washstand. His shaving brush was on the shelf, covered with lather, still wet. As the police had reconstructed the crime, his murderer had stepped up behind him as he stood before the mirror shaving, and cut his throat from ear to ear. There may have been a struggle—we could not tell. One thing was queer—the razor was missing. Riley thought it had been taken away by the murderer to prevent fingerprint work, but I hardly believed that.

“While Riley was moseying around through Camison’s effects, looking for a motive, I examined the body. On the tips of the fingers of the left hand I found two severe burns—bad burns, right into the flesh. I looked at the other hand. There was a burn in the palm of that. I called to Riley.



On the tips of the fingers I found two severe burns.

“ ‘I begin to see light here,’ I said. ‘What do you make of that?’

“Riley studied it for a long time. Then he shook his head.

“ ‘I give it up Nick,’ he said. ‘What do you make of it?’

“ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘I think it is the answer to our crime. If it is, it is the oddest killing that has ever happened in the city.’

“ ‘Let’s have it,’ said Riley. He was always impatient.

“I reconstructed it for him in brief, just as I shall give it to you, without going through all the long chain of links that flipped through my head when I saw those burns. Camison had returned home that night, as you saw him, very late. He intended going out early in the morning, as we found out afterward. So he decided to shave himself.

“Standing in front of the mirror in the bathroom he started to shave. He turned on one globe of an overhead bracket lamp just above his head. He shaved the sides of his face and started to shave under his chin. It was dark under there, the light being above his head. So he reached up and pulled the chain of the fixture to turn on another light. His hands were wet and you know how a leaky fixture will reach for wet hands.

“When he pulled that chain he got a bad shock—a shock that was so severe that it jerked his arms back. The hand that held the razor whipped across his throat with the muscular reflex—I doubt if he knew what he had done until the cut jugular began to spout. Then it was too late—”

Jimmy the Rat sprang to his feet, his eyes gleaming.

“You mean Camison cut his own throat?”

I nodded. That was exactly what I did mean. That was exactly what Riley and I, working far into the eve-



ning, determined there in that house with the dead body of the millionaire on the floor between us and the telltale burns on his fingers for a clue.

"I told Riley that if the theory held we would find Camison's razor still in the room and quite a distance away from the body, where he had flung it with the reflex muscular action produced by the sudden shock of the current. Riley got down on his knees with a flashlight and peered under the bathtub. There against the wall was the razor."

Jimmy the Rat sank back weakly in his chair, his hands working convulsively.

"Holy smoke!" he ejaculated. "Camison did it himself—"

After a bit he rose suddenly and came around the table with his hand out.

"Nick," he said, "I got to shake hands on that. You saved me from—"

"Forget it, Jimmy," I replied. "I am glad I did. I guess it taught you a lesson—your narrow escape. I know it taught me a lot of things. For one thing, it taught me that—"

"Circumstantial evidence is the bunk!" said Jimmy the Rat emphatically.

"Sometimes, Jimmy," I corrected. "Don't forget the gold spoons—"

Jimmy the Rat picked up his hat and climbed into his overcoat.

The only answer I got to that was "good night!" He said it with a grin, and went out into the storm, leaving me with that sense of satisfaction that sometimes comes to a detective as the only compensation in his business—the feeling that grows from the knowledge that an inno-

cent man was saved from a fate he did not merit through a little "head work" at the right time.

There is no gratitude and little reward in the business, and yet, somehow, looking back over the years, that seems reward enough.

## THE PAL OF "JIMMY THE RAT"

“A REAL pal is the greatest thing in the world, I don't care whether you are a crook or not,” said Jimmy the Rat, and he told me the story of “Micky,” the “kid who stuck.” It is set forth here, just as Jimmy told it to me—probably the one human being in the world in whom he confided.

Jimmy was a reformed burglar, pickpocket, “night prowler”—what you will. He would have been rated by a psychologist as entirely wanting in those qualities that made for moral responsibility. Yet, deep down in the heart of this misplaced atom of humanity, doomed to eternally work out his redemption in this or some other life, lurked wholly likable qualities that placed him apart from others of his class.

One such was his affection for Micky, an irresponsible, tatterdemalion and born hobo, who had two front teeth missing, a cheerful grin and a pair of Irish eyes that owned to no possible origin save the Emerald Isle. Thrown together one night in a boxcar while beating their way out of a middle-west town, a mutual liking sprang up. It was only a matter of hours before they were “pals”—a relation whose strong-riveted links are stronger among certain human strata than any brace of handcuffs ever made.

“Let's make a try for a handout,” said Micky, as the train bowled along at a merry clip. “I ain't et since day before yesterday.”

“Nor me,” said Jimmie the Rat.

He peered through a crack in the door. The lights



of a town were just ahead—a water tank stop and then the station. The station spelled possible trouble for them, for there were always "harness bulls" and "rail dicks" hanging around such points.

"Let's shake the rattler at the tank," counseled Jimmy.

His partner nodded. Together they swung wide the boxcar door. As the train ground to a halt with pinwheels of fire whirling from the tight-locked brake shoes, the two swung off into the darkness and struck out for the center of town.

"There's a joint here I know," said Micky. He was more of a globe trotter and "bo" than Jimmy the Rat. He had, as he frequently boasted, underground "hang-outs" from coast to coast, where he could "lie up" for a



The two swung from the box car into the darkness.

season or whenever a "clue sniffer" got on his trail. One such lay here.

The "joint" proved to be a poolroom and bar—a rendezvous for a certain type of yeggs and crooks that frequented that section of the state. It was managed by Big Joe, a huge, red-faced, scowling bandit, with a quick trigger finger and reputation not too savory, even among his associates.

One of Big Joe's assets, as Jimmy found out that night, was a big safe of ancient design, in which were a number of small safe-deposit boxes. These boxes Big Joe rented to sundry of his "customers" for their private "docooments," although it was generally understood that the boxes housed loot taken in holdups and robberies which it was unsafe for the perpetrators to carry on their individual persons.

With Micky leading the way, the two dusty, grimy travelers, fresh from the brake rods of a transcontinental limited, entered the place. They received no heartfelt welcome from the bull-necked proprietor. He permitted them to buy a round of drinks. Then he leaned over the counter.

"Kick in," he said. "Whatcha want?"

"Nothing, Joe," said Micky easily. "We're beating it west and just blew in."

Big Joe gave him a suspicious glance.

"Well, keep blowin," he said truculently. "I don't know you."

"But, Joe—" protested Micky. But the other cut him short.

"Aw, get out o' here!" he growled.

He reached behind the bar.

Micky read the handwriting on the wall. One of two things was wrong—either Big Joe feared that they were prohibition officers, or else they had no "reputation" in



that district. In the latter case, it was well known, as Micky explained afterward, that Big Joe never permitted strangers to hang around his place. It was too risky for him, in his capacity as a "fence" or receiver of stolen property.

Cold, hungry and disconsolate, Micky and Jimmy the Rat started up the street to find another haven. A policeman, who had been watching them over the top of Big Joe's door, to withdraw into the shadows as they came out, came suddenly from the saloon, which they had left. He had stepped inside for a word with Big Joe, and what he learned had decided him.

"Come on, you bums," he said, as he caught the two weary wanderers by an arm each. "You're no good. You don't belong here. I guess we'll tuck you away, where you can't do any harm."

"Aw, hell!" growled Micky.

He knew, better than Jimmy the Rat, just what was ahead. His fears were borne out the next morning when the police judge, a cantankerous old fossil with a sense of his own importance, gave them thirty days each—"vagged" them, as Micky expressed it—and ordered them to clear out at the end of that time.

The thirty day sentence for "doing nothing" embittered both Jimmy and Micky. They had come into the place with no grievance against any one, no intention of committing a crime, and no desire for aught but a place to sleep, a bite to eat and a chance to "hump" with the daylight. But the sentence revised all that. When they were discharged, one August afternoon, and stood blinking at the unaccustomed daylight, it was with a well-formulated and carefully-worked-out plan burning in the breasts of both of them.

During the period they had spent in jail, Micky had worked out a solution of their arrest. It was Big Joe!



He had tipped off the "cop" to their presence in town—to their being strangers in the poolroom. Micky understood thoroughly. Big Joe was protecting himself. The "cop" had to make an arrest now and then. Joe, like the squid, was fogging his own presence by directing attention to someone else.

But—Big Joe had made one mistake. He had not thrown them out soon enough. He had let them remain just long enough for Micky's keen eyes to take in the ancient safe with its strong boxes, and to appreciate the personnel of those in the room. In that instant there had been telegraphed in his alert brain the information that there was money in that safe—plenty of it. Out of that realization had been born a plan.

They had five dollars between them. Micky suggested that they rent a room, as in that way they would avoid being "vagged" by the authorities if picked up again. So after considerable search Jimmy located a lodging house run by a Mrs. Monahan, where one could slip in and out without attracting any attention. Micky paid the woman in advance for a week, and tucked the receipt in his pocket.

At 2 o'clock the following morning Jimmy the Rat and his pal, Micky, gained entrance to the place of Big Joe. By some necromancy of his art, Mickey had managed to scrape up enough "soup," as nitro-glycerine is called by his craft, to "work" Big Joe's "box." They had worked out the details carefully, counting on fast action and Micky's knowledge of the country to effect their escape.

The plan worked, as Micky expressed it, "like a banana peel on the front steps." Ten minutes later, with the front crack of the door all neatly puttied, and a rug rolled in front of the door to take up the impact, Micky touched a match to the fuse in front of the safe and blew

off the door. Almost before the dull echo of the explosion died away Jimmy was into the boxes, handing back coin and bills and stuffing all he could grasp into his own pockets.

They were so engaged when a "night-hack" as a night watchman is known, disturbed by the sound of a seemingly distant explosion, decided to take a look at Big Joe's safe to see if everything was as it should be. He slipped his pass key into the lock of the front door, half opened it on its hinges, and sprayed the interior with his night lamp. In the rays the figures of Micky and Jimmy the Rat stood forth in bold relief in front of the looted safe.

There was a rear door that led to a basement underneath Big Joe's place. Jimmy the Rat darted for it, calling to Micky to come. Instead, Micky closed with the watchman as the latter fired at him. The bullet whizzed past his head and buried itself in the plastering over the head of Jimmy the Rat as he made the half-open door and darted from the steps.

As he reached the bottom he heard the gun crack again, and then the shrill treble of the watchman's whistle. It was too late to go back now. Micky was either dead or captured. He could not help him. The whole town would be aroused. It was a case of save his own skin, and that quickly. He groped around, feeling in the dark with his hands like a blind man. Finally he fell over a rope and tumbled head foremost onto a canvas floor. It was a prize ring in which Big Joe used to stage fights on special occasions.

There were many footsteps up above now. Men were running to and fro. There were voices. Frantically Jimmy burrowed around in the dark, seeking to find some avenue out of the hole in which he had trapped himself. It was only a matter of minutes before they would search the basement. The light from a street



lamp struck full on his face, and he glanced up. There was a window, barred.

"Come on, boys; the other one is down here!"

The voice was that of a policeman and a beam of light from above wavered on the stairs and danced about questioningly. Frantically Jimmy the Rat ran toward the darkest corner, to encounter a big, old-fashioned furnace, cold and cheerless, anchored to the floor. He tested the door with quick, hasty fingers. It was his only chance. With the sound of approaching feet whipping to a frenzy, he threw back the door and crawled inside the furnace.

Jimmy was not a big man, else he would not have



It was his only chance.



made it. As it was, he had just time enough to get his feet inside. His head was against the flue. By stretching his neck in a badly cramped position, he could peep through the grating in the furnace door.

Within a few moments the basement was filled with "harness bulls"—police in uniform. Finally the voice of a policeman cut in:

"He must have got out of here," he said.

Jimmy, crouching down in the furnace pit, took a long chance and peered through the grating. There, directly across the basement from the furnace, was a door leading into a back alley and safety. And, miracle of miracles, the door was wide open!

If he had gone to the left instead of to the right when he first came into the basement, he would have encountered the door instead of the furnace and he would have gotten away. Cramped in his narrow cell, he almost wept with chagrin as the realization of this was driven home.

The police were apparently satisfied with this solution of the affair. He heard them talking of the capture of Micky, how the watchman had stunned him by a blow on the head. With his own escape problematical, Jimmy felt something come up in his throat.

"Poor Micky," he murmured, "he was a good pal, he was."

The police remained in and about the poolroom the balance of the night. Jimmy hoped they would go away and give him a chance to make his "getaway." But they did nothing of the sort. With his last chance gone with the daylight vigil in his narrow pen, praying that something would happen that would work his release.

The day passed with hours of acute agony. When the dark crept in, Jimmy almost dead from numbness and exhaustion, took his chance. He swung back the door,

worked his feet out and fell rather than crawled to the floor. There he lay until the circulation came back into his paralyzed limbs. An hour later he staggered from the place through the side door he had missed the night before, dirty, soot covered and hungry, but safe.

The room he and Micky had rented was in a cheap lodging house in the working district. Jimmy attracted no attention as he walked along the street. He looked like an oiler or a stoker on his way home, and as there were quite a few railroad men in the place, his unkempt dirty condition directed no unusual interest toward him. Gratefully he climbed the stairs to the room. He would bathe, get some of the grime off, dig up a meal and then sleep. After that he would see what he could do for his pal Micky.

He placed the key in the keyhole and swung back the door. Two uniformed cops with drawn revolvers were standing just inside the door, two huge, bulky figures with hard eyes and experienced smiles. They grinned knowingly into Jimmy's astonished face.

"Hello, kid," they challenged. "We have been waiting for you all day."

Something inside of Jimmy the Rat curled up and died, something that had been born of a strange tenderness, a queer affection, an odd brotherhood. Versed in the ways of the underworld, in the methods of the police, there was only one thought that flashed across the screen of Jimmy's comprehension at that moment. Micky had betrayed him!

Weakly he sat down in a chair. The policemen looked at him curiously. It was no new sight to see men crumble like that. It was part of their day's work. Hence they wasted no sympathy on what was to them a routine occurrence. They jerked him roughly to his feet swung him around and "frisked" him for weapons. In-

stead they found a handful of silver and paper, part of the loot from Big Joe's place.

One policeman looked at the other and a smile of gratification crossed his face.

"Well, I guess we got a live one this time, eh, Bill," he commented.

"Aw, go chase yourself," retorted Jimmy the Rat, viciously. "Put on the bracelets and let's have this party over. You flatfeet make me sick."

Jimmy the Rat had experienced many vicissitudes in his criminal career, but this was the first time that the iron of bitterness had ever seared his soul. Betrayed by a pal! That was something beyond his comprehension. He could understand any other form of moral lesion, but in that one regard Jimmy the Rat was as immutable and unforgiving as time. He was stunned that the one man on whom he had counted for the first time in his life had handed him the "double cross."

As the district attorney expressed it, there was "nothing to the case." The man had been caught with the "goods," and, in the case of Micky at least, in the act of burglary itself. Both pleaded guilty. Confined in separate cells, they met only in court. Micky tried desperately to catch Jimmy's eye, but the other kept his head averted, trying to forget the something, suspiciously like tears, that seemed to hover for utterance.

Even when the sentence was passed, sending them to the "big house" for a term of years, Jimmy the Rat refused to look at his former pal. He was through, done, finished. He had been double-crossed and he did not even want to see the man that had done it. Finally, in desperation, Micky turned to his jailer for an inspiration.

"He thinks you tipped off the cops to where they could find him," said the guard.



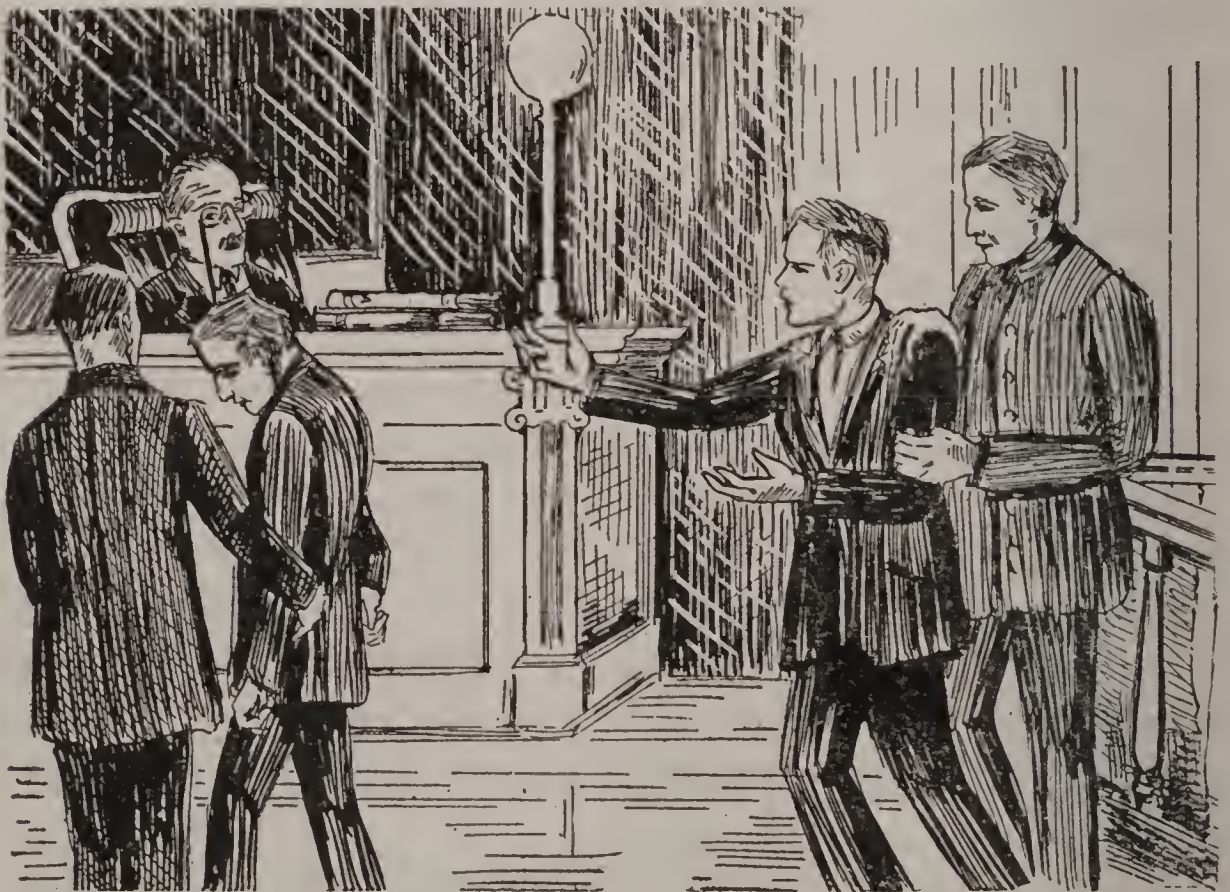
A light flashed across Micky's face. He sprang to his feet.

"Jimmy! Jimmy!" he called. "Don't let them bull you. I didn't tip the dicks off."

Jimmy the Rat did not turn his head—did not even look at the man whose agonized cry brought a sharp rap from the judge's gavel. Instead, he rose, and turning his back on the other, followed the deputy sheriff, who was to take him to the penitentiary from the court room.

Micky was led out, sobbing and fighting with his guards, his last words echoing in Jimmy the Rat's ears for months afterward, to haunt him along with the memory of the thing he wanted to forget—the betrayal by his pal.

Jimmy the Rat was "put away" for four years because he was caught with the most loot on his person. Micky got a two-year sentence. From the day they separated in the court room there was no opportunity given either to



"Jimmy, Jimmy, I didn't double-cross you."

speaking to the other. When Micky's term expired he tried to see Jimmy the Rat, but the latter refused. The memory of what he attributed to Micky as false friendship was too bitter for him to set aside.

Five years afterward he was in a thieves' rendezvous in another city, far west of the one in which Big Joe's place was situated. There he heard that Micky had been killed by the police while robbing a store in the south. His dying words, told to an emergency hospital surgeon, were: "Tell Jimmy I didn't double-cross him."

Jimmy scoffed at the message when it reached him through the underground service. He was still bitter about the matter. The incident had changed his whole psychology of human life. He never trusted anyone again as a "pal" although he had many friends. Often one of them would approach him with a proposition to "pal" with him, and always Jimmy the Rat answered the overture in the same sentence:

"I was stung once," he would say.

One day he was arrested on suspicion of being involved in a local theft. While he was being held for investigation by the detective bureau a member of another department arrived in the city for a prisoner that was to go back with him—a detective from Big Joe's town. He recognized Jimmy, and they talked over the saloon robbery. Jimmy expressed bitterness over the part Micky had played. The detective looked at him curiously.

"Jimmy," he said, "for the sake of your dead pal I'm going to tell you something. Micky didn't give away on you at all."

Jimmy the Rat sprang to his feet, something within rushing to the surface in a pent-up flood. He clutched the other by the arm.

"What's that?" he demanded in a hoarse voice. "You say—"



"It wasn't Micky," said the detective. "I caught Micky myself—I was in harness then. When we searched him at the station we found a rent receipt in his pocket—a receipt signed by Mrs. James Monohan. We hunted for a landlady by that name, and finally located her. Then we left a couple of boys on watch and you walked right into their hands. I thought you ought to know this, because it's not right to hang it on Micky."

Jimmy the Rat sank back trembling. Micky innocent—Micky, with his Irish eyes, his joyous smile, his reckless—

The detective got up after a bit and tiptoed out. It isn't pleasant, even for a policeman, to watch an ex-convict cry.

This was Jimmy's story of the only pal he ever had. It was the thing that drove him straight, when all was done and said. Jimmy himself says he has contracted a debt to Micky that somewhere, some day, he will pay.

"We're not through here, are we, Nick?" Jimmy asked me. "Because—well, I'd like to let Micky know.  
\* \* \* You see, if a guy lives again—gets a chance to square accounts, I could go up to Micky and say—"

I never found out what he would say. Jimmy has tried to tell me several times, but always he chokes up and goes away hurriedly. For Jimmy's sake, I hope there is another life.



# THE PHANTOM SHOT

## *Another Jimmy the Rat Story*

CROOKS have their peculiar vagaries. Some will not work on Fridays. Others eschew the thirteenth of the month when planning "jobs." Walking under a step-ladder is considered bad luck, while a black cat encountered en route to an activity is an omen never to be disregarded. With Jimmy the Rat, bank-worker, safe cracker and handy man of crime, a bottle of whisky stands for a "peck of trouble." And thereby hangs the tale of the phantom shot that made a prohibitionist out of Jimmy in one episode.

Jimmy is usually a careful worker. When he plans a bank robbery or a safe-cracking job, he takes his time. He studies the position of the institution, the entrances and exits, the windows, doors and light, with all the attention of a stage manager. He is particular about "get-aways" and such things, and most particular about the movements of nightwatchmen, police and plainclothes men. It may take him weeks to plan it all out and a few seconds to execute it. But when the job is done, it is a work of art.

Only once did Jimmy slip in his precautions, and this was due to the fact that he was cold and hungry, wet, tired and anxious for a hot meal and a place to sleep. He had "two bits" in his pocket between him and starvation, for so he told me the story and it looked like a bad night.

"Says I to myself," he said, "'Jimmy, ol' top, it's time to knock over a can and knock it over fast.' "

By a "can" Jimmy meant a safe, for in the nomenclature of the safe worker's craft a safe is either a "can" or a "box." "Knock it over" meant, reversely, to open it up. Wherefore we have the setting of Jimmy with an appetite and a longing for the good things of life that could be bought with money, planning the wholly illegal and reprehensible task of robbing somebody's safe. The only question was to find the safe.

With the rain coming down in sheets, Jimmy sallied forth on his quest. The night was dark and few persons were abroad. Policemen, for the most part, were huddled under protecting doorways with the rain running from their uniform slickers in streams, or safely ensconced in the back room of some warm saloon enjoying the stolen comfort of a glass of warm punch and a good cigar furnished by the bartender. It looked, as Jimmy expressed it, like a "hot bet" that he would accomplish his task.

Crossing an alley, his attention was attracted to the rear of an unpretentious office building. Jimmy happened to know the building. He had been there several months before to have some dental work done. In a general way he carried a picture of the interior arrangement in his mind. The offices were mostly those of dentists and doctors, and as he recalled it, there was only an aged elevator operator on duty. It looked promising.

With a quick glance up and down the street that convinced him that no wary policeman was watching his movements, he slipped into the alley. To his intense joy he found a window unlocked in the rear of a display room for a millinery establishment whose plate-glass windows fronted the street on the other side. It was the work of a moment to satisfy himself that there was no burglar alarm on the window. The next instant he had the win-

dow open and was inside, feeling his way along the aisle formed by cardboard boxes stacked ceiling-high.

The storeroom of the establishment led to the main salesrooms. With only the light from the street lamps to guide him, Jimmy scurried along in the shadows until he reached a side door that opened into the hallway. He tried the latch and found it to be a simple spring affair, opening on the inside. He set the catch so it would open from the outside, and after making a quick survey of the empty hallway, stepped quietly out and closed the door carefully behind him. If worse came to worse, this was a good escape.

There was a light shining out of the elevator, making a pencil of yellow along the tiled floor. Jimmy estimated rightly, that the operator was curled up on his stool, reading, with the doors open ready for business. Carefully Jimmy removed his shoes and tucked them under his arm. Then, as noiselessly as a shadow, he flitted up the stairway to the second floor, from thence going to the third and fourth floors.

There were many lights here and there in the various offices, where bookkeepers and conscientious clerks humped over delayed work, working far into the night. Jimmy smiled scornfully as he thought of these. He was the free game, the big stuff. They were ants, atoms—the dust of commercialism. They were deposits upon the shoes of the bigger figures whose names he saw occasionally in the papers. They thought they were doing something important. Well—let them. He knew what real work was—work with a “kick” in it. His was the man’s job.

The fourth floor was for the most part dark. There were a string of offices there. One physician had his name on a dozen doors it seemed. Jimmy went softly from one to the other, testing the knobs. There was al-



ways a chance . . . He could take out the pane of glass if he had to, but he preferred the forgotten lock first, for, as I have said, Jimmy was more or less careful.

On the eighth floor, he found what he sought—an unlocked entrance. Some nurse, perhaps, had neglected to drop the catch. It was the work of a minute to slip inside, amid a whiff of anesthetics that puffed out of the warm interior, cast about him, and determine that he was in an operating room. The instruments stood forth with glittering ghostliness in the half light of the room. Beyond seemed to be an office. . . .

Jimmy investigated. Sure enough, as he had hoped, there was the official inner office which every physician has. Against the far wall of the room was the conventional type of safe which, to a man of Jimmy the Rat's expertness, was as easy to open as an unlocked door. Jimmy smiled to himself. It would be a "cinch" job and there would unquestionably be good picking here. Mentally he rubbed his hands together. He would eat this night.

From an inner pocket Jimmy took out a pair of gloves—ordinary silk gloves—with which he usually "worked" his safes. They prevented fingerprints and were thin enough still to permit him to retain the sensitiveness in his fingers demanded by the task of opening the safe by "feel." Then he rummaged through the drawers of the flat-topped desk until he found what he wanted—a stethoscope—a mechanical ear of more than ordinary delicacy.

With the tubes in his ears, Jimmy crouched before the safe, the bell-end of the stethoscope cupped against the flat metal door, his nimble silk-covered fingers busy with the knob of the combination. Two, three, five minutes passed, as Jimmy, motionless save for his fingers, worked with the secrets of the inner tumblers. At length there came the sound for which he had waited—a sharp, click-

ing jar. A smile flitted across Jimmy's face and he sunk back with his weight against the handle of the door.

With the tubes of the stethoscope tucked in his ears, he did not hear the clang of the elevator door. He failed to note the footsteps approaching along the hallway. Only when the man who came quickly down the hall paused in front of the door behind which Jimmy was at work on the safe, did he become cognizant of his presence. With a jerk he swung his head around to see silhouetted against the glass the shadow of the stranger.

Pressed right against the safe door, Jimmy held his breath. The man stood motionless for a moment. Then there was a flash \* \* \* \* Jimmy felt a cold, stinging sensation on his right breast. He ran his hand under his vest, directly over his right lung \* \* \* It came away wet. Jimmy staggered to his feet. There had been no sound of a shot and yet \* \* \*



The man stood motionless, then there was a flash.



"My God!" he exclaimed. "He used a silencer on his gun."

Frantically he started to run. Through office after office he went, falling and stumbling over furniture. At the far end of the suite of offices, he staggered out into the hallway. He was panting from his exertions and from the great fear that was creeping in upon him. Jimmy had seen men shot through the lungs before. It always got them in the end. There would be long days of coughing. Sometimes it was a matter of hours, and the gaunt suffering in the face. He was afraid, for the first time in his life.

He made the lower floor. The aged elevator man looked up in wonder as Jimmy the Rat fled past him into the night. He finally concluded that it was some belated tenant, rushing for a car, and went back to his reading. He did not notice that Jimmy held his handkerchief pressed tight over a wet spot on his breast or that his breath came in gasps. Jimmy himself had no coherent idea of where he was going. He could feel that ghastly wetness trickling down his body against the skin now.

The lights of a corner drug store caught his eye. Perhaps he could induce the druggist to dress the wound. He steered for the spot, his knees sagging. Directly in front of the lighted window, he came to a halt. Withdrawing his hand slowly, he forced himself to look at the handkerchief he had pressed to the creeping spot of dampness. The handkerchief was soaked. So was the white silk glove he wore. Jimmy stared, fascinated, paralyzed. There was no crimson stain—the awful, tell-tale crimson he expected to see. There was no color at all. Slowly he raised the handkerchief to his nostrils and sniffed. \* \* \*

Whiskey!



Then only did light break. Then only did Jimmy the Rat, weak with reaction, lean up against the window of the drug store and cling to the stanchion of an awning. Then only did the truth of the situation strike home with a force that left him weak and nerveless.

He had a bottle of whiskey in his pocket—in his inside coat pocket—when he entered the physician's office. He had the bottle pressed tight against the safe door when the man fired at him. \* \* \*

Jimmy's eyes opened suddenly and he began to laugh—a half hysterical laugh that had relief and incredulity all intermingled.

The flash had not been a gun equipped with a silencer at all. The man had halted to light a cigar. The flash was the gleam of a match—in that second Jimmy had cracked the bottle against the safe door, and the whiskey, trickling down his body, cold from the evaporation of the alcohol, had led him to believe he was shot. His imagination did the rest.

The real jolt came when, casting a casual eye over a morning paper, he found that “the unidentified burglar who attempted to rob the safe in the Henshaw building overlooked \$2500 which was lying on a shelf in an inner compartment.”

“Right there,” said Jimmy the Rat, telling me the story, “I became a prohibitionist!”

# THE CAUSE OF DIVORCES

*As Explained by Jimmie the Rat*

NOT so many months ago I was called upon by one of the most noted churchmen and social workers in California. As luck would have it, when this party entered my office I was in the middle of a conversation with Jimmy the Rat, and feeling this social worker would naturally appreciate meeting this famous character, I introduced them to each other.

We will call this social worker Mr. Waterton. After meeting Jimmie and thinking possibly he was one of my aids, not knowing him to be one of the most clever burglars and safe crackers in America, Mr. Waterton proceeded to inform me the purpose of his mission. He stated, "Mr. Harris, you are probably more familiar with the crime waves now sweeping over the country than anyone that I personally know whom I would call upon, and the organization that I represent is very desirous of ascertaining some statistical facts concerning the question that is of vital importance to the welfare of every community. I am going to ask you a question which I believe you will be in a position to properly answer for us because of your acquaintance with these facts. The question is, 'Can the cause of divorce be traced to the present crime wave?' "

I was about to ask Mr. Waterton why he should ask me that question when Jimmie the Rat looked up, seemed very offended and asked if he might answer that ques-



"Jimmy the Rat" looked up and asked if he might answer that question. I said, "Sure, Jimmie, what's your idea?" and he answered:

"Why, Nick, crime and criminals have very little to do with the average divorce cases. As a matter of fact, you will find the majority of criminals stick closer to one woman whether they be married or single, because they are just 'pals,' and the only thing that usually separates them is the long term in the 'stir.' (Meaning the penitentiary.) The average wife of a criminal will stand 'pat' to her husband for at least two years, when she gets lonesome and new found friends will oftentimes be the cause of her 'forgetting' and she may secure a divorce, because of the pleadings of these new friends that her husband is a convict. But if you want the real cause of divorce, this is my answer, and which applies to a large percentage of the male population. You ask me how it starts. Well, it is very simple. I will give you a



few concrete examples taken from my observations as I have passed through life.

"First, did you ever see a swell looking miss being most gallantly assisted from an ordinary street car by a man? Did you ever notice how he acted toward her? In fact, he looked like he wanted to play a Sir Walter Raleigh stunt every step from the street car to the curb. Well, it's a safe bet that that sort of a couple are not married—to each other.

"Perhaps the very next day you see this same prince of the streets getting off the same car, followed by a lady, perhaps really more wholesome and worthy than the girl of yesterday, and her arms filled with bundles and because of such, she was just a little bit careful of her step and just a little slow in getting off, and this self-same 'prince' will cast an icy stare at her over his shoul-



"Hurry up! You're blocking the traffic!"

der and blurt out, 'Hurry up. You're blocking the traffic.' Well, you can bank on it they are married—to each other.

"Then again, do you recall the many little instances that happen every day in our office building elevators when a Plymouth Rock chick flits her wings inside the coop, all the men hawks break their elbows to doff their hats as a mark of courtesy to this little hen. But, when our own fair wife enters the cage with us, do you recall how we pull the old sky piece down over our ears so the draft in the elevator shaft don't get down our necks? Yes, that hurts, but you know I speak the truth.

"Now, let's move to our home life for a while. When we come home from work, Mary dear has a nice steaming supper waiting—you notice I said 'waiting.' Yea, while we used to wear out our elbows holding that evening appetizer over the bar in one of our famous drink emporiums while 'Windy Alex' would unfold a bunch of bunk about his grandfather's sister's mushroom bed on the old farm, or how his wife forgot to put out the cat and he got up and nearly broke a toe over a stray chair trying to perform the usual even-tide exercise, all of which was of no interest to us, and yet we would sip our poison fluid and stretch our faces out of shape trying to smile at his tiresome story.

"Well, just as we hit the home cabin we think we know what's coming, so have faked a beautiful lie to tell and right away we bring on that overworked, tired business man's appearance, and ask if supper is ready. Dear little wife humbly answers, 'Yes, sweetheart, what kept you so late?' and you pull off that old story about being delayed at the office.

"Meantime, little wife busies herself setting the fodder before swine who forgets his bride is present



and probably stretching her shoulder out of place trying to snare the salt cellar with the tips of her fingers, about which time said 'porcus' has applied a second treatment to his plate, leaving a neat trail of gravy spots across the freshly ironed table cloth, all of which could have been prevented by a more careful manipulation of the tablespoon in the hands of the household lord and master, who seemed not to think of the work he could save his wife by a little careful effort.

"You remember these things. Nick, it don't take a detective to tell you that it's just the little observations in every day life like these above mentioned that I have noticed, that often start that little drops of water story which soon grows larger and larger and every day, until friend wife combs back her hair and finds that she is not getting the attention due her that she justly deserves, resulting in her seeking other fields of pastime than children for a thankless man that hasn't time to shower a bit of affection and consideration so dear to the heart of the average present day girl.

"Now, of course, I have only picked on the male species, and to be fair I should mention a few facts concerning the other side and give them their just desserts, because you know what they say about the female species being more mummified, or something, because you know when they are bad, why that deadlier species stuff is likened unto a bleating lamb in comparison."

It was right here that I interrupted Jimmie and said: "Do you know, I believe that you are right, in so far as the male species you mentioned are concerned, as I have seen these things happen many times myself. Now, with reference to the women, let me try to explain things that I, too, have seen.

"I recall once a woman calling at my office and telling me her husband had disappeared and she wanted me to



find him. I asked her the usual questions to get information for the purpose of identification, etc., and wound up by asking the lonesome woman if they had ever had any trouble. She raised her eyes to Heaven and said, 'Bless you man, no. Our married life was ideal. Never a cross word. Bliss had reigned in our home like the lives of two doves in their twiglet nest.'

"I took up the trail from the little home town, feeling foul play had befallen the genial old gentleman, as nothing but a serious crime could have separated such a dear old couple as had been pictured to me. My entry in the home town was a happy event for me, as I was sure I could find someone who saw him leave and perhaps be the cause of my bringing together this missing partner of the firm, thereby bringing gladness into the hearts of both.

"Imagine my discomfiture upon being greeted by laughter and gibes when I made inquiry concerning their fellow citizen who had so mysteriously disappeared but a few days before. One dear old lady said: 'Is that old heifer bawling for her calf again? Why, man alive, he has gone to see his mother to find out if insanity runs in his family.' Another said: 'Yes, he left town because he had a chance to work in a slaughter house and he wanted to know how much beating a brute had to take before it killed him.' With a few more such remarks I made up my mind to find out what was the cause of this comment and why he left.

"Hence, upon investigation, I found that he and his wife had lived in a small cottage that one might think was the Temple of Filth. Discarded tin cans, rubbish, papers and trash scattered all over the yard where sweet wife had conveniently tossed them upon preparing her usual meals. The interior of the house looked almost as bad as the yard. Anything but neatness prevailed.

On several windows I found blankets had been tacked up, and I was afterward told, it was for the purpose of keeping the sun and draft out of the house, as she would allow no ventilation to circulate inside this Palace of Joy.

"It was one morning that the final trouble broke loose. Husband had arose and because of the darkness of the kitchen, had torn down one of these blankets when he was informed that she was the boss there, and to make it more impressive she backed it up by crowning him with a nice large coffee pot of hot liquid, and when he remonstrated with her, it was in the midst of an egg frying episode, and having a nice large half fried egg resting conveniently on the pancake ladle, she let this fly, making a safe hit on the pinnacle of friend husband's nose. This naturally riled the old gentleman up to such a state of mental distress that he left the house that same



She let the half-fried egg fly at his head.



day, selling out his business, and left for parts unknown at that time.

"It took my agent, Frank Edmonson, now sheriff of Vernon, Tex., some three months to finally locate him in southern Florida, where he refused to effect a reconciliation with his wife, but as I understand, made provisions to provide for her as he does not have to live with her.

"In cases of young married couples I have noticed many of their troubles start through petty jealousies caused sometimes by the new wife meeting and calling up former sweethearts, only to be found out later by the young husband. Where the seed of distrust has been planted, the green-eyed monster called jealousy creeps into the heart of man, and soon ends in the husband employing detectives to verify his suspicions, and in many cases the investigation develops into discovering clandestine meetings between the former sweethearts and others and ultimately ending in the hands of attorneys to be carried to its final resting place before the courts of our counties.

"So now you see, Jimmie, I guess that kind of backs up your argument and I hope, Mr. Waterton, that you will not ask me to try to suggest the cure for these most unpleasant features of our existence, further than to make these few friendly suggestions, that if men would only treat their wives as they used to treat their sweethearts, and if wives would only treat their husbands as they used to treat their sweethearts, the machinery of divorce courts of today would soon be reduced to a pile of rust and junk that would cause society to move it away and dump it in the place called 'oblivion' where it could sink from the sight of man, never to return, and allow us to enjoy our lives as originally intended by our Creator."



## THE POLICEMAN'S TRYST

THERE is much of humor in the police and detective business. A whole volume could be written on the funny things that happen and never see the light of day. Of such was the romance of Policeman Number 111, who was lured from the path of duty by the witchery of a piquant face, and nearly shocked into bachelorhood. Herewith the story of a July tryst, with an oriental touch.

Policeman Number 111 had his quota of romance buried deep within his brass-buttoned bosom. He was the older of nine boys, with not a girl in the family, and he grew up, as many lads do, with supreme contempt for the genus feminine in every phase and form. It was not a hate—just an indifference, based upon a sense of masculine superiority. He felt they were useless appendages upon the caudal ornament of progress, and throughout his younger years he ignored them.

There was such a thing as love. Of that Policeman Number 111 had no doubt. He had seen the word in print, he had heard it sung about in popular songs, and he had seen men and women do strange and queer things when under the mysterious propulsion of its hidden forces. But it had never touched him. Love he associated with women. It was a mollycoddle pastime and went with wrist watches, perfumes and such things. He in love? "Where do you get that stuff?"

Such was Policeman No. 111—blase, indifferent to female charms, contemptuous of the "ladies' man," and wholly superior to the thrills of which the flesh is heir

when dainty pink and fluffy visions cross the path of vision. At the age of 32 he was a strong, upstanding, clean-limbed, flat-thighed, efficient member of a metropolitan department, assigned to traffic duty. He was browned by the wind and sun, healthy, and wore his uniform like a glove. He was, in short, in the vernacular of his craft, "a handsome geek," sans pour and sans a scrap of reproach.

Policeman Number 111 was stationed at a certain park crossing during the rush hours of the day. Many a feminine eye turned his way longingly from behind the curtained seclusion of a finely upholstered limousine. Many a heart fluttered just a bit at that particular spot as he touched his cap in impersonal recognition to the tid-bits that fluttered by. But of all this Policeman Number 111 was wholly unconscious. With him, it was all in the day's work, and his friendly smile had nothing of



Policeman No. 111 was stationed at a certain park crossing.



direct interest behind it—only the politeness required by his particular brand of duty.

This story has to do with the month of July, however, a queer, upsetting kind of a month. The poets rave of the allurements of June—of its weather, of its spring stirrings, of the queer thoughts and dreams that go pounding through the brains. But they have overlooked July when those dreams come true or turn to ashes, when the thrills become madness and the virtue of a world-old insanity pounds at the temples. A man may fight off the insidious temptation of a thrilly June and fall a prey to the drunken suggestion of a fragrant July. So, Policeman Number 111.

It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon. A sprinkling cart had just passed the crossing on which Policeman Number 111 was meditating on the miseries of human existence. A moist, refreshing smell arose from the steaming pavements that had baked steadily in the midsummer heat. On the edge of the curb—the park curb—a maid from one of the wealthy homes along the boulevard, paused to let the stream of traffic pass her—a baby carriage containing somebody's expensive heir, balanced on its hind wheels, expectantly.

Indefinitely might the stage have remained set thus but for the appearance of Mrs. Van W——, a prominent society woman, enroute to an afternoon bridge party with an intimate friend. They were gossiping in Mrs. Van W——'s limousine, as women are wont to do, and Mrs. Van W——, to be perfectly frank with facts, was not paying a great deal of attention to her driving. She was on an open boulevard, and the car was rolling along easily, Mrs. Van W—— at the wheel.

Policeman Number 111 was in the act of hitching up his belt when there came the sudden screech of brakes, and a bevy of feminine screams. The next instant, Mrs.





Mrs. Van W's fancy vehicle pivoted on the wet pavement.

Van W——'s fancy vehicle pivoted sharply on a wet spot left by the passing sprinkler, slewed half around and careened into the curb at just the point where the maid, with the baby carriage tilted back on its wheels, had been but a moment before. As the wheels of the motor car struck the curb the glass shattered out of the windows with a merry tinkle, piling the occupants in a heap on the floor.

Policeman Number 111 broke into a run. Naturally tender-hearted, he thought of a crushed baby, mangled through the careless driving of a thoughtless woman, which made him sick to his stomach. As he ran, he cursed under his breath, both the man who made the automobile and the man who permitted his wife to drive it in that fashion. \* \* \* He rounded the rear end of the machine and brought up sharply.

There, sprawled gracefully on the lawn was the

pretty little maid, her knees drawn up, her head cocked on one side, and the baby in its carriage quite unhurt. As Policeman Number 111 plunged into the picture the girl glanced up quite calm-eyed, took in his neat uniform, and his startled, concerned face, and smiled what Policeman Number 111 afterwards told himself was a "perfect million-dollar smile."

"Oo—Monsieur Gendarme—you look so fonney!"

Throwing back her head she burst into a peal of laughter.

Policeman Number 111 brought up in amazement. He had been smiled at, waved to, cajoled, tempted and intrigued. But never before had a pretty girl sat on the lawn on a public boulevard and laughed at him.

A sudden dull flush came into his face and he stood up very straight.

"I thought you were hurt," he said stiffly.

A sudden contrition came into the girl's face. She jumped to her feet and laid a hand on his arm.

"Monsieur," she said softly, her piquant face upturned to his with a look in her eyes that made him dizzy, "I am ver' sorry. It was that you looked so—so, oh, so scared. It is not nice of me to laugh, n'ent-ee-pas? Please to forgiv'——?"

The anger in Policeman Number 111's soul died down, flickered and went out. The color left his face, leaving him a tanned, handsome, embarrassed traffic "cop" fronting a very pretty maid.

"That's all right," he said. "So long's you're not hurt, it's all right," he said. And then he added something which surprised him almost to death when he thought of it afterward, for never in his whole life had he said a thing like that to a woman.

"I wouldn't want that to happen to you," said Policeman Number 111 firmly, not looking at the girl.



The little maid stood for a moment in silence. Then she reached out and patted him on the hand—the hand which he used to halt traffic on his corner day after day.

“Oo-la-la,” she said. “That is a—ver’ pretty thing to say, Monsieur Gendarme.” Only she drawled it entrancingly so that his part of it sounded like “Jean-darme,” with the accent on “Jean.”

She turned to the baby, tucked it in, gave it a motherly pat, and flashing the traffic regulator a ravishing gleam of white teeth and crimson lips, disappeared down the boulevard. Policeman Number 111 stood watching her in silence, a new and wholly original series of emotions flitting through his consciousness. Only when someone touched him on the arm and remarked in a harsh tone: “Young man, will you listen to me!” did he return to the realization that Mrs. Van W— had arisen from the floor of her damaged limousine and with as much dignity as a woman of fifty can maintain with her best hat cocked over one ear, was trying to explain how she came to make such a mess on the city’s main boulevard.

The day was all different for Policeman Number 111 after that. For the first time in his life he noticed that there was a bird on a tree. Also that a girl in a machine that went by had a blue flower on her hat. Also that children were cute little devils after all. There were a lot of things that Policeman Number 111 had overlooked, it appeared. All the way home that night, back to his modest room in Mrs. Tim Riordan’s boarding house, he marveled how much of life had escaped him.

He did not see the maid until two days later, when she suddenly appeared at his elbow as he stood for a moment beneath the shade of a friendly tree and mopped his forehead.

“’Ello, Monsieur Cop,” she challenged. “You will not ’ave to save me, today.”



Dynamite! Electricity! T. N. T.! Policeman Number 111 rose to the occasion—magnificently.

“That’s too bad,” he said gallantly.

The vision in white cap favored him with another of her wonderful smiles.

“Oh,” she questioned, “you lak do that—again?”

“Every day in the week and—and then some!” Policeman Number 111 spoke emphatically, his breath coming a bit short.

“Oo—you know what I seenk, Monsieur Gen? I seenk you are ver’ nice boy.”

Policeman Number 111 took a cautious look up and down the boulevard. Then he stepped a bit closer.

“Same here, Marie,” he said daringly. “You’re a nice girl, too!”

The girl’s eyes widened.

“Oh, you know my name!” she said in surprise. “How you know zat?”

Mon. Gen., otherwise known as Policeman Number 111, executed what is known in diplomatic circles as a “*coup cordiale*.”

“It’s a long story,” he said smoothly. “If I was off duty now I could tell you all about it—”

Which is pretty good work for an inexperienced policeman having his first fling at the intricate and thorn-strewn road of romance—

The evidence in the case of John Doe Eros, alias the God of Love, versus Policeman Number 111 has been submitted to the Court of Time from behind closed doors. We, of the general public, are not permitted to hear it. But, of the results that were the outgrowth of that famous case much can be said.

Policeman Number 111 went off duty that night with something singing in his heart. He had made his first “date” with a girl—with Marie. He could hardly

believe it. He caught himself thinking how different their understanding was from that of other persons. He even smiled, tolerantly, as he passed a couple on an uptown bus, the youth's arm around her waist. If that was Marie now—Policeman Number 111 straightened up suddenly. It would not do to go along blushing on the street that way, and he a copper.

Marie had said for him to call on her at 8 o'clock. She was employed at the De Courney mansion, a short distance from the spot where he stood and directed traffic during the hot summer days. She had explained in her delicious French-American patios that she had never before entertained company and that her mistress might object, and would he come to her quarters over the garage.

"Ze door—she will open," she had said. "Maybe, I will look for you—maybe not."

Of course he knew that she would be looking for him. She had said he must be very quiet—they could talk for a while—if her mistress did not object, later she might receive him in the kitchen. But tonight, her room over the garage.

Policeman Number 111 ate his dinner abstractedly. Mrs. Riordan, his ubiquitous landlady watched him closely as he guarded his secret from a jealous and critical world. She made "Irish turkey" and it was Number 111's favorite dish, and yet he pushed back his plate with the contents half eaten.

"By golly. I'm wonderin' if it's himself that's in love!" She speculated sagely through a crack in the door.

Thus does the general law of average upset the best laid plans of mice and men, and a traffic policeman.

If this was a film, a "cut-back" would show Marie, hurrying through her evening chores so that she might

rush out to her room over the garage and add a bow there, and a pat here in honor of her forthcoming cavalier "Mon. Gen." Not being a film, we will have to spend the next sixty minutes with Policeman Number 111, pacing restlessly along the streets, awaiting the hour of 8 o'clock to come. Under his arm, wonder of wonders, was clutched a five-pound box of "elegant" chocolates. Verily, Policeman Number 111 was a changed man.

At 7:45 o'clock to the minute, an ice wagon, belonging to the General Ice Company, locked wheels with a taxicab belonging to the General Taxicab company, at the corner of the boulevard where Policeman Number 111 attired in a nice new Stetson hat, was enroute to keep his first "date." The conversation became immediately general, also the honors going to the iceman, who possessed the more fluent vocabulary of the two. The controversy smote upon Policeman Number 111's ears.

Technically, Policeman Number 111 was "off watch." But technically also Policeman Number 111 was always "on duty." His day's work was done it was true. But he was a sworn officer of the law and that was a constant condition, a state. Hence, whenever any infraction occurred within his presence, whether he was on watch or not, it was his business to step into the situation and preserve the public peace. Such was the motive that actuated him when he turned the corner of the boulevard in time to hear the iceman remark to the taxi driver in Billy Sunday accents that his, the taxi's driver's parents, had proved the correctness of Darwin's theories beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"Hey," said Policeman Number 111. "Cut out the comedy, what do you think this is—the casino?"

The iceman looked at the taxi driver. Instantly they buried their enmity, born of the locked wheel, and



turned on their common enemy, the representative of the law.

"Aw go chase yerself, you big buttinsky."

Which episode explains why it was that at precisely 8 o'clock when Policeman Number 111 should have been climbing the garage stairs to Marie's apartments he was, instead, standing in the precinct, nearly a mile away, engaged in booking the remnants of what had once been a perfectly good iceman and a fairly efficient taxi driver for "disturbing the peace, loud and boisterous language, and resisting an officer."

There was a long delay incident to the arrest of the two prisoners. They had to be taken to the emergency hospital and epidermically vulcanized in sundry places, where Policeman Number 111's club had played a xylophone solo in an effort to drive home the idea that a policeman never "chases" himself but frequently chases a lot of other persons. After which they were again returned to the precinct station and shown to a cell. Then only did Policeman Number 111 glance at the desk sergeant's clock, whistle softly to himself and hurry away to keep his long overdue tryst.

After some difficulty he finally located the garage of the De Courney mansion. It was situated at the end of a long graveled drive and stood forth dark and uninviting. A sudden fear clutched at the heart of Policeman Number 111. Suppose she had gone. And he had no palliative, the box of chocolates long since fallen by the wayside when he locked up the two boulevard combatants. It was an inauspicious beginning.

He tried the handle of the garage door. It yielded softly. Policeman Number 111 smiled. She was waiting for him after all. She had left the door open. Softly he stepped inside. A stairway at the right led to the upper floor. Carefully guided by his flash lamp

he stepped over the tools that lay scattered on the floor, made for the stairway and creaked upward. At the top, another door led to an inner compartment. This, too, was unlocked and with his heart thumping with excitement and romance, Policeman Number 111 pushed it wide and stepped inside.

There was a single window in the room—a bedroom, apparently. The light from a corner arc fingered the sill of the window, spread across a bed in the corner of the room, and brought out the figures on the carpet underfoot. On the bed an arm flung across the coverlet, a dark braid dropped carelessly over the pillow, lay a still figure. In its absolute silence Policeman Number 111 could hear a rhythmic breathing—her room!

He thrilled at the thought. It was the first time he had ever been in a girl's bedroom . . . It was something sacred to him . . . like a shrine. He held his



On the bed lay a still figure.



breath, wonderingly . . . Should he step back into the hallway and knock, or should he stay where he was and call aloud . . . She had grown tired of waiting for him . . .

Suddenly it occurred to him that he was in somewhat of a predicament; if he startled her and she began to scream and aroused the household, he would be in rather a mess. And Marie, how about her? On the other hand, he was already in her room. If he attempted to leave, she might hear him go out and scream, thinking him a burglar, and again the same thing would ensue.

All of Policeman Number 111's professional training came to his rescue as he turned over plan after plan in his mind, only to discard them instantly as impractical. He was in and he could not get out, and he could not wake her, and he could not stand there all night . . .

In moments of stress, great thoughts occur. One such hit Policeman Number 111 behind the ear with the force of one of "Babe" Ruth's homers starting for the Rio Grande. Somewhere, when he was a child, he had read a story—a story of a Princess and a Prince—a Prince who awakened his lady-love in a way that had not startled her. Standing alone in the dark, Policeman Number 111 blushed a hot crimson at the suggestion, but he clung to it nevertheless. He would kiss her—Marie . . .

His decision made, Policeman Number 111, with a fluttering solar plexus, tiptoes softly to the bedside of the sleeping figure. Her face was in the dark, but a faint, delicate perfume that was strangely familiar, struck upon his nostrils and intoxicated him. He felt himself engulfed in a wave of romance, of intrigue, of dizzy sensation. It was the biggest adventure of his life . . . his greatest moment.

Slowly, cautiously, he leaned down and pressed a chaste lover's kiss upon the dainty lips of . . .



“Hey—whasha malla, washa malla . . . Gee mom—quock lui bong goy . . . washa malla you . . . ?”

Policeman Number 111 sprang back into the shadows as an unmistakable Oriental figure rose suddenly from the bed at the impress of the kiss, and with its cue flying in the air, burst into Chinese imprecations and shrieks of terror.

Only for an instant did he stare at the apparition, and then, without a moment's hesitation, he turned and fled—out into the hallway, down the garage stairs and along the graveled drive—while the Chinese cook, for such it was, made the night hideous with his startled jargon.

Somewhere near dawn, Policeman Number 111 turned his steps wearily up to the front entrance of Mrs. Riordan's select boarding-house and flung himself down on his bed. He was tired, spent, irritated, exhausted, humiliated—a lot of things. He did not know that Marie's mistress had been taken ill and Marie had been obliged to stay in the house that night, and that the Chinese cook had taken advantage of her absence to “steal” a sleep in a sacred place. All that impressed Policeman Number 111 was that he had given his maiden kiss to an Oriental—Faugh!

At the assembly the following morning, the precinct captain instructed the various patrolmen to be on the lookout for a man capable of wearing a new Stetson hat, size seven and one-half, who had attempted to rob the De Courney home. The burglar had left his hat behind him, after he had been frightened away by the Chinese cook, the captain said.

Policeman Number 111 followed the captain's outstretched finger. There on the “exhibit” board in the assembly room, hung his new twelve-dollar Stetson hat—

Of course there is a finish to this story. Marie and

Policeman Number 111 had it out the next morning. Marie explained about her mistress' illness and she was so "ver' sorry" she had missed keeping the appointment, and Policeman Number 111 bethought himself of the iceman and the taxi driver, and he was equally sorry that he had been unable to keep the appointment, and so they made another and much more satisfactory "date" which led to others. And in the course of time, *ad lib*, Policeman Number 111 kissed Marie.

Marie, the little devil, smiled up at him from under the shadow of his shoulder, and asked him the question Mother Eve asked Old Man Adam back in the Garden of Eden:

"Mon. Gen." she purred, "deed you efer kiss zee girl before?"

Policeman Number 111 blushed unseen in the dark and snuggled Marie closer into his grasp.

"No," he said, "I didn't." Then he choked a bit—"I—I kissed a Chink once," he confessed.

Down in police headquarters, a dusty Stetson hat, size seven and a half, still hangs on a nail in the property clerk's room—unclaimed!

## THE SOWARDS MURDER

THERE is a queer characteristic possessed by every good newspaper man and by many detectives that stumps psychologists, medical men and professional writers of fiction. It is the ability to "feel" a crime in the air—to sense its approach, to know almost to the hour and minute when something is going to "break" and just what it is.

Persons not engaged in either business cannot understand this and put statements of it down as exaggerations. But time and time again I have seen it work. I have known reporters to look at a clock and remark that such and such a thing was due to occur, and within an astonishingly short period of time it DID occur. The thing is explainable only on a psychic basis of some kind—the registration of occurrences in process of happening upon perceptions long trained in probabilities, perhaps.

So on the night the Sowards murder broke. There was the crime "feel" in the air—the gruesome, strange, tense gnawing at the pit of the solar plexus that those of us, long at hand grips with the sordid side of life, call a "hunch." It was so strong with me that I could not get my mind off of it. I was a police reporter for a Los Angeles morning paper at the time, detailed at police headquarters, and the responsibility of keeping track of police events rested upon my shoulders.

Nervously I paced the press room. Outside it was raining in sheets—one of those cold, wet, tragic nights fit for any crime and fraught with whole regiments of imag-





"Anything doing?" I asked Captain Bradish.

inactive possibilities. After a bit I went into the detective bureau.

"Anything doing?" I asked of Captain Bradish, in the usual slang formula of the reporter.

"Dead as a coffin," said the sleuth on duty. "What do you expect?"

"Don't know," I answered. "Seems like we ought to have a murder tonight . . ."

"Say," said the detective, "do you know, I've had that hunch myself? It's been hanging around for an hour. Hope not. It's a nasty night."

Restlessly I started back to the press room. As I did so, I heard the jangle of my telephone. Instantly something telegraphed to my nerve center—jarred it like a blow.

"It's happened!" I said to myself.

I broke into a run, dashed into the room and jerked the receiver from the hook. It was my city editor and he was in a hurry.

"Say, Nick," he fairly shouted over the wire, "a woman telephoned in here just now that something bad has happened at 700 block South Main street. She didn't say what it was . . . Better grab a couple of dicks and slide down there. I've got a camera man on the way, already."

"Right," I replied, and grabbed my hat and overcoat.

In the detective bureau my friend, the night sleuth, was just getting into a comfortable position. In a few words, I told him what I had just learned.

"I knew it," he said. "Look at that weather, will you?"

He grabbed his revolver from the table, slid his flashlamp into his pocket, and calling to another detective, who was on duty, ran for the police patrol. Within less than five minutes, we pulled up in front of the cheap lodging house on South Main street that bore the number "707." Detective Steele led the way.

We found the landlady in a highly agitated condition, with her hair hanging down her back, and several guests running around in the hallway, babbling incoherent details of something "awful" that had apparently taken place.

"What's wrong here?" asked Craig, the other detective.

The woman sensed at once that we were from police headquarters.

"Oh, I don't know . . . It's terrible, I just looked over the transom . . ." She began to weep hysterically, moaning that nothing like it had ever happened in her house before.

A guest in the place indicated a locked door.

"In there," he said. "There's blood all over the place."

We ran to the spot. Craig glanced up at the transom.

"Here, Nick," he said, "let me boost you up—tell me what you see."

He was a powerful man, and catching me around the waist, he lifted me bodily so that my chin was even with the bottom of the transom. Through the dirty, unwashed glass, I could make out in the dim light of a gas lamp the body of a man lying on a couch. On the floor was a large dark stain.

I told what I had seen. Craig dropped me on the floor and called to the landlady.

"Hey," he shouted, "cut out that sniveling and give me a key to this room."

The landlady relapsed into acute hysteria due to a violent attack of imagination.

"I don't know where it is," she wailed. "I don't know where it is."

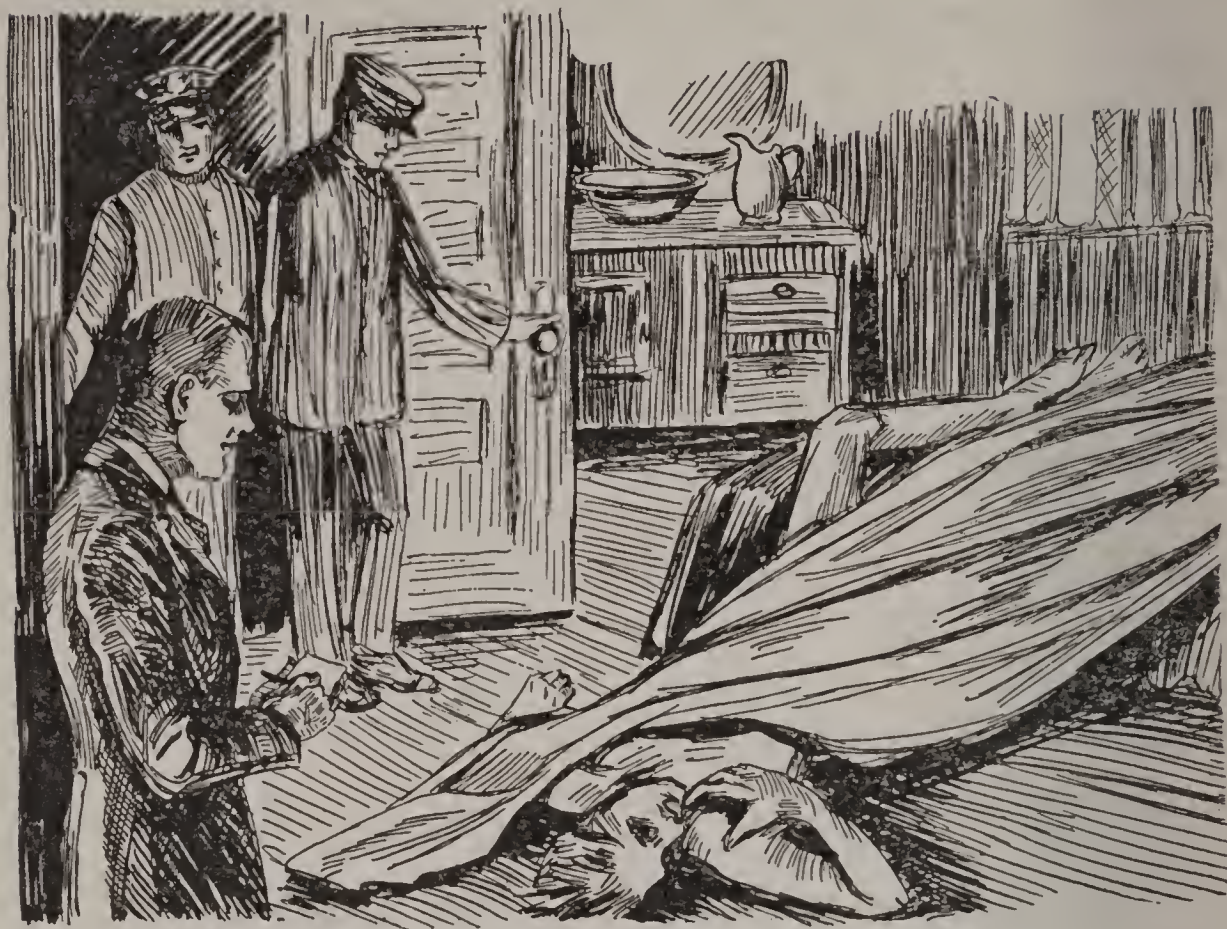
Detective Craig stared at her for a moment. Then he smashed his bulk against the door. The catch gave with a sudden snap and the door swung back against the wall with a crash. A breath of awful, tainted air whiffed in our face.

"Open that window, Nick," muttered Steele as we staggered back from the actual impact of it.

I ran up a curtain and let in some air.

The scene in the room was the most sickening I have ever seen in my whole life. The murdered man was lying half over the couch, partially nude, with his head resting on the floor. He had been dead a long time—probably a week. His skull had been crushed in and there were finger marks on the throat. Blood was spat-





The murdered man was half lying on the couch!

tered on the walls and on the ceiling. It was as ghastly a setting as could well be imagined.

"Good Lord," said Craig, usually unimpressible, "this is a regular shambles."

We made only a cursory examination. The body was already decomposed and any possibility of obtaining a clue to the murderer from it was rendered impossible. The other detective started making inquiries—the usual kind—of the landlady, now restored to talkativeness by the importance of having a murder in her house, and other lodgers.

Craig went into the office and telephoned to the coroner.

I closed the door after Steele went out. I wanted to be alone there for a moment. There might be some clue. . . .



A porcelain jar standing beside the cheap wooden dresser attracted my attention. I went over to it. It was filled with bloody water. Evidently the murderer had paused long enough to wash his hands. I peered down into it and noted a scrap of water-logged paper that had sunk.

There was no sink in the room. Steele and Craig were still out of the room talking to the landlady. I did some quick thinking, and then lifting the dirty rug, I tipped over the jar and rolled the dirty water along the floor, dropping the rug back over the pool. It blotted it instantly, covering up the evidence that I had tampered with it. On the floor at my feet lay the scrap of paper.

Gingerly, without examining it, I picked it up and tucked it in my pocketbook. For first of all, I was a reporter, hot on the scent of a murder mystery. I would



On the floor lay the scrap of paper!

work with the police in time—such alliances are usually understood—but at the first break of the story, whatever clues I could unearth were to my individual credit. For that matter I did not know what I had, only that it was something that the police had overlooked.

Detective Steele returned after a bit, releasing the telephone to my use. I telephoned in the story of the murder, adding that the only clue in the case was a scrap of burned paper found in a jar in the room. Then I went back to the scene of the crime. The coroner had arrived and after a thorough combing of the place, which revealed nothing of importance we left. Before departing, however, we ascertained from the landlady that the dead man was unknown to her. She said the room had been rented by another man entirely—one who gave the name of Cox. Police search started for this man as the probable murderer.

Back at police headquarters I had time to examine my find. It proved to be several scraps of paper torn into bits and lighted with the intention of destroying them. The person who applied the match, evidently sure that they would burn, had tossed them into the wash jar, and in the poor air in the bottom of the jar, they had burned out. What to do with them?

Somewhere I had read that wet papers containing writing, if pasted on glass, could be read. I went into the identification bureau and procured a blank plate from the police photographer. Then, hunting out a back room at police headquarters, where I would not be seen by reporters from any of the other newspapers, I proceeded to paste and fit the burned scraps on the glass.

Many of them were missing—probably burned, and others were torn in odd shapes and patterns. But gradually, after two hours of unceasing patience, order be-



gan to come out of the chaos. Here and there whole words appeared. Finally I got a completed sentence. At the end of two hours and a half, I had accounted for all of the scraps. \* \* \* \*

The paper proved to be a note for \$2,000 payable to J. Madison Sowards and signed "Martin E. Cox!"

The discovery startled me. The man who rented the room in which the dead man had been found was named Cox—probably Martin E. Cox. Was the dead man then Sowards? And who was Sowards?

There was a telephone directory on the table. I pulled it toward me with shaking hands. Sowards—Sowards, J. Madison! Proprietor of the Star Loan Company with offices in the Copp building adjoining the City Hall. There it was, as plain as day—a big man in his business, a handler of money. Was the ghastly, beaten, mangled, decomposed body in the lodging house all that remained of the loan company's head? That question was the big question now.

I called the number of the loan office. A girl's voice answered.

"Is Mr. Sowards there?" I asked.

"Why, no, he isn't," she answered. "He's—are you a friend of his?"

There was plainly agitation in her voice. I resolved to play a daring card.

"Well, not exactly," I said. "But he didn't keep an appointment."

"That's just it," the girl spoke excitedly. "He hasn't been here for more than a week. He left to keep an appointment. I thought perhaps you—"

But I waited to hear no more. I slammed up the telephone and ran into the office of Captain of Detectives Bradish. There before his astonished eyes, I laid down my glass plate with the reconstructed note for \$2,000 on

it. Then I told him of my conversation with the girl in the loan office. His eyes opened.

"By George, Nick," he said when I had finished, "you ought to be a detective!"

He detailed Steele and Craig, who had accompanied us in the first place, and the three of us went to the loan office. It took only a few minutes there to satisfy ourselves that in all probability Sowards, who had not been seen since he walked out of the office a week before, was the murdered man.

"Did he have any money on him?" asked Craig.

"I don't know about that," said the girl. "But he had a lot of diamonds. He had loaned some man some money on the diamonds and the man telephoned to him to bring the diamonds to his room and he would pay back the loan and the interest."

Steele and I exchanged glances.

"The man's name wasn't Cox, was it?" I asked.

"Why, yes," replied the girl in surprise. "I believe that it was."

That was the end of the case. Sowards had been lured to the room, murdered and robbed by Cox, who escaped with both the money and the diamonds. He was traced to a South American country and later arrested, but I believe extradition deficiencies prevented bringing him back.

The important part of this case to me, lies in the remark that Captain Bradish made to me—namely, that I ought to be a detective. That remark, thrown around carelessly, has ruined many a good man. It "did" for me, as the English say. I took him seriously and became one. Now, I am writing my own memoirs, which proved that it doesn't pay to joke with a reporter. He is liable to take it seriously.

## THE YELLOW SLIP

THE sharp, shrill scream of a woman cutting, whip-like across the stillness of a July night.

My cigar described a circle of sparks as I flipped it into the street from the hotel veranda and started on a run toward the little wharf that fronted the ocean. There were several boats tied to the wharf. A white spot bobbed in the half light.

It was the work of a minute to unleash the painter, catch up the oars and swing toward it. A woman's fingers clamped frantically on the gunwales.

"I don't want to die! I don't want to die!"

Back at the wharf I picked her up, her hair trailing over my arms, her soft, summer gown clinging damply to her body, and ran toward the hotel. My wife met me at the steps, her eyes wide with anxiety. Together we carried her upstairs and away from the curious eyes in the lobby.

An hour later, warmed, comforted, her feet in my bedroom slippers, she smiled wanly up at us—a mere slip of a girl, with the tired lines of the world's misunderstandings carved deeply in her face—Mary Somerton; more a name to conjure with, a face fit for a flower. Then she told us.

Her husband was in jail—a minor offense, a check drawn against a wrong account. The disgrace had overpowered her. She had wandered down to the wharf. The pall of the moon, the strange iridescence of the water, the slow swing of the tide—



"I don't know why I jumped, only that I wanted to rest."

That opened the mystery of the yellow slips—not then, but the next day when I went to see the husband and told him what had happened. He fainted dead away in his cell. Revived, he proved a likeable chap with a strain of weakness, but wholly contrite. Two months later he had made good, and he and Mary went out of my life. But that night. "I am going to do something for you, Harris," he said, "because you have cared for Mary. I haven't any money, but I have information that may be of value."

He had a cell mate, whose name I have forgotten. They had grown chummy. This man knew three girls in Los Angeles who were making a business of working department stores—turning them into a "mint," he said.



"I am going to do something for you!"

They had "worked" other cities and, so he alleged, had "cleaned up big." They were just starting again.

"He doesn't know their game," young Somerton explained, "but here is the address—the X apartments on Olive street. The girls are Jean, Edith and Clara—I don't know their last names. This may be of some help."

I thanked him. Tips come to a detective in various ways, and this was undoubtedly genuine. At the time I was handling the business for a number of big department stores and the matter of three professional "workers" was of more than passing interest to me.

The campaign against them was mapped out from my office. The stellar actors were Operatives Nos. 1 and 2, whom I knew I could trust implicitly. Sitting in conference we outlined exactly how we would proceed in the matter, and pursuant to that arrangement, they took up the trail of the three girls that very day.

We located the girls without any difficulty. That is to say, we located two of them. They were supposed to be sisters and gave the names of Edith and Clara Johnson, occupying Apartment No. 31. They were well behaved, quiet in their habits, entertained no company and at home, at least, led exemplary lives—a fine setting against which to stage almost any line of action of an illicit nature.

Adjoining apartment No. 31 was apartment No. 32. I knew the manager of the place, and it was easy to arrange with him for a room adjacent to the apartment which we had set out to watch. With this arrangement perfected, the two operatives settled down to the hardest part of all detective work—the day and night "shadowing" of some one under surveillance—the nerve racking, tiresome vigil of ceaseless observation.

The girls led an even life, one almost wholly devoid of incident. The movies occasionally, and a cafeteria





She did business with a tall blonde!

rather than cafes for dining purposes. But the day following we began to pick up the threads.

At 10 o'clock in the morning, Clara left the apartment and went to Bullock's department store, where she spent considerable time in the suit department. She did business with a tall blonde salesgirl, whom we afterwards ascertained to be Jean Parsons of St. Louis. She purchased a suit and asked to have it charged, giving the name of—we will say, "Mrs. George Landis," a well known customer.

The salesgirl took the charge tag to the cashier's window. The cashier scanned the scrap of paper. The name "Landis" was thoroughly familiar to him. He turned to the girl.

"Do you know Mrs. Landis personally?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Jean.

"This is Mrs. Landis, herself?"



"Oh, yes."

The cashier nodded, marked "o. k." on the tag and handed it back. The girl returned to her department, turned the tag over to the head of her department with the remark that it had been "o.k.'d," and wrapped up the suit. Clara, alias Mrs. Landis, walked out with the suit under her arm.

Of course when the operatives reported this to me, I knew that I was on the right trail. Plainly the girl had "done" the department store out of the suit. We could arrest her then and there, for there was no doubt in my mind but that Mrs. Landis had not authorized her to buy anything at that store. In fact, I was morally certain that Mrs. Landis had never heard of her.

But I had a "hunch" that there was more behind this thing. It had been done too easily. The girls had plenty of clothes and from the kind of stuff they were wearing it did not strike me that they would bother with a \$65 suit, which this one was. It seemed to me that there must be something more behind it all. So I resolved to play a waiting game. I instructed Operatives 1 and 2, giving them orders to keep a close watch on the two women.

That night my men got the surprise of their lives. There was a knock on the door of the girls' apartment. Peeking from the door of apartment No. 33, Operative No. 2 saw the tall blonde salesgirl from Bullock's department store. The girls greeted her affectionately as "Jean" and invited her in. There was dinner on the table, and it was apparent that Jean was expected. With the air filled with the odor of good things to eat, the three sat down to a real girls' feast, and the sort of chatter that occupies the attention of women when alone together.

Within three feet of their heads as they sat, was a

dictagraph tucked neatly inside the "bell" top of their chandelier, with the wires leading down inside of apartment No. 33 to the ears of my listening operatives. Every word that they said was as clearly audible in the next room as though the operatives sat at the table with them—a fact of which they were, of course, entirely ignorant.

There was considerable talk about social dates, references to coming trips, to a "run" up to San Francisco. And then:

"That was a nifty suit." This from Jean. "It is one of the best in stock. You had better bring it back in the morning."

That was all—"You had better bring it back in the morning." Another mystery! If she had stolen the garment, why bring it back?

In the adjoining room the two operatives, humped over the dictagraph, exchanged glances. They listened intently for additional scraps of conversation that would furnish further clues. But nothing of importance developed. The blonde girl remained several hours, later going home. She was not shadowed. We could find her when we desired.

In the words of the fiction writer, the plot was beginning to "thicken" rapidly. First off there were two girls, one of whom had stolen a suit worth \$65 with the aid and connivance of a second girl, employed as a sales-girl in the store. Second, there was a third girl yet to be accounted for—Edith. What was her "game"? Third, after stealing the suit, Clara expected to return it. That the whole was part of a well worked out program was evident from the very casual reference which Jean made to it. It was apparent on the very face of the matter, that they were but following a customary procedure.

The following day Operative 3 was added to the staff on duty at the apartment house. He did not enter the building. Instead he entered a machine, half a block away, riding low on his spine and reading a magazine. Under observation, he appeared as a chauffeur idling over a magazine while his mistress visited somewhere along the row of fashionable apartment houses. But he was far from that, for closer observation would have revealed that his eyes never left the front door of the apartment in which lived the three girls—Jean, Edith and Clara.

At 10 o'clock Clara came out with a suit box under her arm. She walked west three blocks and took a downtown car. Operative No. 2 acting under orders, came out of the apartment house a few seconds after she left, and stepped into the machine driven by Operative No. 3.

"Which way did she go?" asked No. 2.

"Turned the corner," said No. 3. "Making for a car."

When the street car came along, Clara boarded it and took a seat on the outside section, placing the suit box on the floor beside her. Half a block behind the street car, a machine bowled along, keeping the car constantly in sight. In such manner they entered the traffic maze of the mid-city area, constantly nearing the department store.

While Operative No. 3 trailed the girl into the store, the driver notified me. I immediately jumped down to the department store, in time to see Clara search out her companion, Jean, and make some sort of a protest openly before the other clerks. There was a considerable amount of conversation. Finally Jean called the floor manager. He came forward and there was more talk.



I learned afterward that Clara had returned the suit with the statement that her husband did not like it, and demanded her money back. After some argument, the money was refunded through the cashier's window, the clerk, Jean, identifying the suit as one which this same woman had purchased the day before for \$65. In other words, Clara got \$65 in cash for a suit which was charged to Mrs. George Landis. The thing was simplicity itself.

Calling my house detective, I took her aside and explained the situation. Together we approached Clara, and placed both her and Jean Parsons, the clerk, under arrest. They protested violently, Clara assuming all the airs and mannerisms of a wealthy woman and Jean in tears—quickly assumed. Clara declared her husband would sue us and presented a most defiant front until we had them both locked in the manager's office.

Then I told them what they had been doing, from beginning to end. Then only did they both break down and confess that they had been making about \$3,000 a month in that manner, through false charge accounts. Jean's part of it was to secure employment as a salesgirl and "identify" the woman to whom the clothing was charged. Then, after the suit had been exchanged for cash and before the regular customer received her statement and discovered that she had been falsely charged with a suit, Jean would leave her job and the trail would be lost.

Both girls made a clean breast of their participation. But they shielded Edith. They said she was "on the square" and that they had picked her up in St. Louis because she was out of work, and brought her along with them. They denied that she had any hand in their operations. We had nothing on her, at that time, so we turned the two girls over to the police, as both had

prior jail records, and turned our attention to Edith.

I had just returned to my office when the telephone rang. It was from Operative No. 5, on duty in another department store, to inform me that Edith had just been arrested while shoplifting some valuable furs. She had a large hat bag on her arm with a hole in the side. Her method was to place the bag over a fur, run her hand through the hole and subtract the fur from the stock. She was caught with a \$40 fur in her hand.

This brings us to the yellow slips. In the handbag of Clara we found a handful of yellow slips, all charge tags from various department stores. With this as a clue we ran down a wholesale system of looting which these three girls had been conducting all over the country. Much of the property was returned, the girls having used it for personal adornment or home furnishing, and with the assistance of the police in various cities we were enabled to return it to the stores from which it had been taken.

The girls confessed everything after we found the yellow slips, and after a quick trial were ordered sent to jail. From last reports they are still in jail. Clara came up to me in court, after the case was over.

"Mr. Harris," she said, "will you tell me how you first got wise to us?"

Sitting on the district attorney's table, I told her of the girl who attempted suicide in front of my beach home, and the links of the chain that followed. Clara studied me with somber eyes while I talked. Then she sighed.

"Well," she said, "I had an old time crook tell me in 'Chi' once that in the long run the smoothest of them lose out. I didn't believe it. I haven't believed it all through this case. I will tell you frankly that I would have gone back to the 'game' as soon as I could escape my sentence.





"I am through forever."

But I'm glad you told me this. Now I **KNOW** it can't be done! It isn't the unexpected that you foresee, it's fate that's all against you. When I get out I'm through—forever."



## A PAIR OF SHOES

MY friendship with "Jimmy the Rat" goes back a number of years to a city in the northwest in which big crime dramas have been written from raw materials. We got the drift from lumber camps there, primitive, virile elements that fought and lived hard, and frequently, much too frequently, died hard.

The detective bureau to which I was attached had a hard shift. It was small, considerably smaller than adequate to cover the district assigned to it. And it had some of the worst characters in the country to handle. It was not often that we really had to pit our brains against those of a professional crook.

The crimes ran mostly to murder, killings that grew out of brawls, sudden reflexes that were the result of anger, drunkenness, or a woman's preference. There would be a shot or a knife thrust, and the killer would run. Usually it was child's play to find him, for, first flush of the thing over, he would seek some saloon, drink too much, become talkative and awake in the "cooler."

But "Jimmy the Rat" was the exception. He was our first big "professional." Jimmy and I have laughed over this since, sitting in front of a wood fire in my apartments and "swapping" experiences. But at the time Jimmy drifted across our ken, suave, dapper, convincing—we were somewhat "hicks" in the matter of crime detection. It has always been a source of considerable pride to me and chagrin to Jimmy that it was a fragment of old time detective work that netted our first big catch—himself.

This was particularly disconcerting to Jimmy, because the professional crook has a supreme contempt for the methods of the fiction detective. In a measure he is correct in his attitude. Crime detection is not accomplished the way most fiction writers map it out. It is not done, piece by piece and inch by inch. Detectives as a class are not clever analysts, despite the myriad plays and stories to the contrary.

The catching of criminals in nine cases out of ten, is the result of something that the criminal himself forgot to do or overdid. Engaged in an abnormal pastime, he acquires an abnormal viewpoint of things. He exaggerates his precautions—places under value on some parts of his structure, or underrates some other part. A detective faced with the task of catching him, comes suddenly upon something unusual. Immediately he asks himself: "What was this done for?" and right there starts the train of inquiry that ultimately lands his man in jail.

I have often thought that were I going to become a great criminal I would study the ordinary. I would work within beaten paths. I would live with the regular things of life so that in the final conceptions of the crime there would be nothing unusual in it. For experience has taught me that in the great majority of cases, the catching of criminals depends upon this one great truth—this one oversight—the permitting of the trail to depart from what the world calls usual.

So with "Jimmy the Rat" a pair of boots—but that is going ahead of the story, which really begins with a water-front saloon in a murky-pooled, dimly lighted section of the city, much frequented by habitues of the underworld, where "Jimmy the Rat," a newcomer to the city, "knocked mitts" with "One-Eye" Davis, one

of the toughest yeggs and "blanket-stiffs" that ever rolled a pal in a box-car.

It was early in September of a year famous for its rains. "Jimmy the Rat," cold and blue, but always particular as to clothes, wandered into the saloon—lured by the promised necromancy of a hot toddy, and electric piano, and the chance for casual "pickings." There in the short space of a few minutes he became acquainted with "One-Eye."

The latter drifted up to the bar while Jimmy was buying himself a drink.

"I'm broke," he said, succinctly.

"Same here," said Jimmy, and then added with the good nature which was eternally a part of him, "but I guess I can stake you to a smile."

The bartender obeyed the cryptic order, and with a couple of steaming glasses between them, "Jimmy the Rat" and "One-Eye" Davis, whose sobriquet was based upon the lack of one optic, formed a working co-partnership with a rapidity that would make a trust magnate open his eyes in wonder.

"Anything doin'?" asked Jimmy, after a bit.

"One-Eye" dropped his voice and ran his remaining "lamp" over the drunken, brawling aggregation in the room.

"There is a live-wire guy," he remarked.

Jimmy counted his surplus cash with the rim of his finger nail. Then he led the way to a corner table.

"Shoot!" he ordered briefly.

"One-Eye" leaned over the table and spoke in a husky whisper:

"Can you open a box?" he asked.

For the uninitiated let it be understood that a "box" is crook nomenclature for a safe. Jimmy considered. He had two dollars between himself and starvation.



The winter season was coming on. Outside it was cold and wet. He was a stranger. It might take him some time to find something with money attached, for, while he could crack a safe with the best of them, Jimmy's normal trade was picking pockets, and this profession in a lumber community did not look promising.

He stared at "One-Eye" for a moment boring into his soul. What he saw there decided him. He would take a chance.

"I might," he said. "What's the lay?"

It seemed that there was a warehouse nearby in which a considerable sum of money was carried at times. The safe was an old fashioned affair, easy to negotiate, with only an aged deaf watchman to guard it. As "One-Eye" put it, the job was like "takin' a watch off a dummy."

It took "Jimmy the Rat" only the barest fraction of a second to make up his mind. Why not? The authorities knew him not. With the money in hand and a good suit of clothes which he knew how to wear like a gentleman, there would be nothing to it. His new found friend said there was as much as \$20,000 in it sometimes.

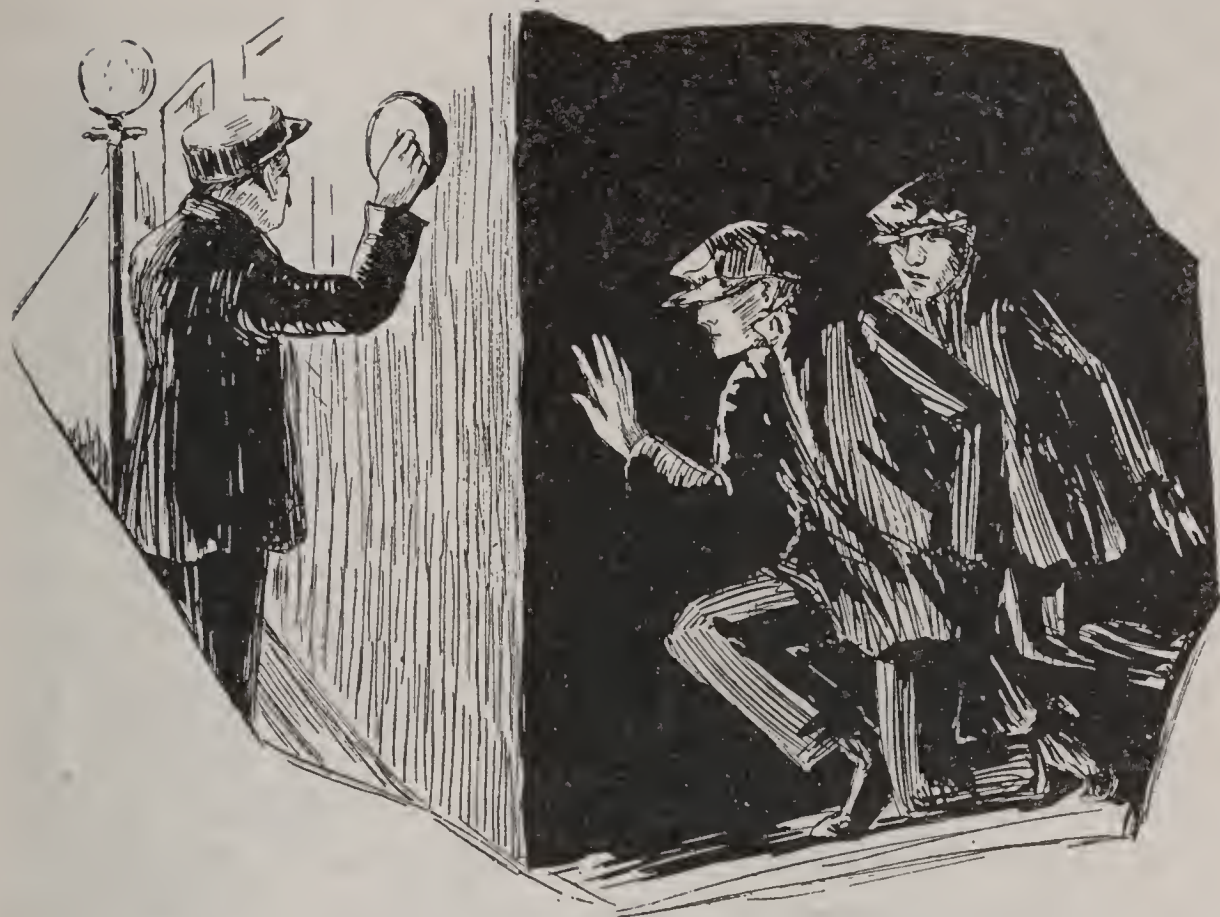
"When and where?" asked "Jimmy the Rat."

"One-Eye" drew a tremulous breath.

"Good," he said. "I knew you was a live kid. These mutts"—he waved a scornful hand—"these mutts ain't got nerve enough to pull a job like this. I've been savin' it for the right bird. You look like the one I've been waitin' for."

"All right, all right," said Jimmy. "Cut out the lush. Let's have the layout."

At midnight that night the safe of the Northwestern Warehouse Company was scientifically and thoroughly looted. It proved to be easier than even the optimistic "One-Eye" had anticipated. Crouched in the shadows



Crowded in the shadows, the two cracksmen watched the night patrolman making his rounds.

of the long, gloomy building, the two cracksmen watched the watchman go his rounds, ringing from a time clock at the office, thence at four other points throughout the building and one at the rear.

"He goes to lunch at 11:30," whispered "One-Eye."  
"That's our chance."

It was. Hardly had the watchman's stogy feet tramped down the boards of the wharf toward the lights of a distant chop-house when "One-Eye" had his "jimmy" under the edge of the rear window, snapped the catch, and was inside the building, with Jimmy close behind him.

The place was jammed with freight. Bales and boxes towered to the ceiling. Underneath, as they stood in silence for a moment, they could hear the tide lapping at



the piles. Up against the rafters, rats scuttled along "eeking" to each other. Through the cracks in the floor a cold, icy wind whistled and sent a chill up their spines.

"Come on," said "One-Eye." "I know the way."

As quietly as possible they worked their way forward to the office of the warehouse, where a solitary light burned over a desk. Beside the desk was a safe, and Jimmy's heart jumped when he saw it. It was an ancient "one-tumbler" affair that a child could have opened with a hatchet and little patience. For a man of Jimmy's experience it was nothing at all.

With his ear pressed against the steel door "Jimmy the Rat" knelt before the safe and began to twirl the combination knob with practiced fingers. Before he touched it, however, he took the precaution to tie one fold of a handkerchief over the knob with a bit of string, thus preventing fingerprints from registering, a proceeding that aroused "One-Eye's" admiration.

"Say," he commented, "you're a wonder . . ."

"Cut it," curtly admonished Jimmy. "You keep that lamp of yours peeled for trouble."

It only took a few dextrous twists of the knob before something clicked inside the safe. Removing the handkerchief from the knob, Jimmy wrapped it carefully around the handle of the door and pulled. The door swung wide, revealing a bundle of gold notes and greenbacks all neatly tied in two packages and labeled.

"Good gosh!" said "One-Eye," leaning forward, his eyes nearly popping from his head.

As he did so, a huge figure of a man suddenly bulked in the doorway. Jimmy learned afterwards that he was the watchman's son, and that, unknown to "One-Eye," he had been sleeping in the warehouse to watch it during his father's absence. He was still groggy with sleep,





The form of a man appeared in the doorway.

having been awakened by their conversation perhaps, and stood blinking and swaying in the opening.

"Hey," he said, "what's the idea?"

"Jimmy the Rat" jumped to his feet, his one thought of escape; "One-Eye," being all yegg, handled the situation after his own fashion. There was a short iron bar lying on the desk, usually used as a paper weight; without a moment's hesitation "One-Eye's" hand shot out. The bar flashed for a grim second in the light of the drop lamp and crashed down on the giant's head. With a sickening thud he crumpled on the floor, his fingers clutching at the boards.

An exclamation of horror broke from "Jimmy the Rat." He was a crook, a burglar, a pickpocket—all of these perhaps—but he was no thug. Fascinated he stood staring at the stricken figure before him. He did not hear the muttered imprecation of "One-Eye." He did

not hear him run down the aisle between the freight rows, racing toward the rear. He was conscious only of the iron bar, crimson-smeared and accusing, and the clutching fingers—

The sudden shout of a voice followed by the wicked crack of a gun brought him out of his inertia. Directly ahead of him was the street door—the main door of the warehouse. The watchman had come through that as he went out to lunch. Some hidden process of memory stood him in good stead now. He recalled, almost clairvoyantly, that the watchman had simply come out and pulled the door shut. He had not locked it.

His mental processes co-ordinating suddenly, Jimmy jumped over the fallen man and tested the door. It gave easily. He opened it a trifle and peered out. The street seemed empty. He started forward. His heel caught and he stumbled and pitched forward onto hands and knees. In such manner he scrambled along in the shadows until a safe distance away from the door, where he stood up and took stock of his position.

Directly at his elbow was a wharf that paralleled the warehouse. Connecting with this were other wharves. He ran quickly to the water's edge. It was as he thought—an almost endless succession of piers, wharves and warehouses stretched before him. He smiled to himself. Unless he aroused some other watchman, he was safe. Rapidly yet silent as a shadow, he began to hurry along this fringe, heading instinctively away from the Northwestern's pier and leaving the open safe and its money behind him.

All the way up town he figured on that shot. Had "One-Eye" been shot? Or had he gotten away? He sensed instinctively what had happened. Some harbor policeman had noticed the open window at the rear, and "One-Eye" hurrying to escape from the warehouse, had



plunged directly into his arms. Subsequent events justified this theory. It was exactly what had happened.

Jimmy spent the rest of the night in his room, steadying his shaking nerves with a bottle of whisky and calling himself a fool for going into the venture. He had always worked alone before. He was crazy to have considered "One-Eye's" proposal. What if "One-Eye" squealed? The thought set his over strained nerves jumping again.

Dawn found "Jimmy the Rat" pallid and shaking, again on the docks, but this time at the far end of the town, where the river boats discharged their valley cargoes. A freighter, out of her beaten path, was taking a load of fruit aboard. An idea had sprung into his brain, out of the dark hours of the night and he had decided to follow it. The freighter provided the way. He turned up the gang plank.

Two days later "Jimmy the Rat," his dapperness exchanged for the general dinginess of a sailor's garb, walked down the gang plank of the self-same freighter, his coat over his arm, and started up town. He was a registered member of the crew and had made a trip one hundred miles inland and return. It had been hard labor—harder than Jimmy had done in many a day. Every muscle in his body ached, for handling heavy cases is not quite a sinecure, and there were blisters on his hands, but one thing had been accomplished. He had established an alibi.

Two other members of the crew accompanied him as far as the police station. They had business elsewhere and had merely walked that far out of sociability. Directly in front Jimmy parted with them.

"Well, so long, fellows," he said. "I'm goin' in and see if I can get a friend out of hock."

The others laughed.



"Soused again," said one, and they left him.

Jimmy walked boldly up to the desk-sergeant's window. There were several of us in the place at the time. It was my first meeting with "Jimmy the Rat" and I frankly confess that he fooled me—at first. He looked so completely the sailor, and besides I had been standing at the window and had seen him leave the others.

"Have you got a guy here named Davis?" he asked.

"What Davis?" asked the sergeant. "We got a couple of Davises."

"Bill Davis," said Jimmy. "I think he calls himself 'One-Eye' or something of that kind."

"Oh," said the sergeant, "you bet we've got that bird. What do you know about him?"

"Nothing," said Jimmy with an assumption of casualness. "Me and him used to sling freight together, that's all. I saw by the papers that he was in a jam, and I thought maybe I could get him a mouthpiece or some cigarettes or something."

A "mouthpiece" is thieves' argot for a lawyer. It was right there that "Jimmy the Rat" slipped. He admitted it afterward. But he explained it by saying that he figured we were so much of a hick community that a precaution of that kind was unnecessary. It illustrates what I mean by out of the ordinary thing giving the clue. The instant he uttered that word my brain began to work.

"I guess we can let him see 'One-Eye,' " I said.

The sergeant gave me one look. Then he tumbled.

"All right, Nick," he said. "Let him in and I'll give him a pass."

I opened the spring lock on the sergeant's door and "Jimmy the Rat" came inside. He was very cool and nonchalant about it, throwing his coat over a chair and sitting down with all the sangfroid in the world. As he crossed one foot over the other my eye was attracted to

his boots—a pair of serviceable heavy boots with thin, well-worn soles. In that second I knew I had the man for whom we had combed the city for two days—the partner of “One-Eye” Davis in the attempted robbery at the Northwestern warehouse.

“What’s your name?” asked the sergeant as he dipped the pen into the ink and held it poised over a pass blank.

Jimmy was prepared for the question. He answered without hesitation.

“James Grogan,” he said.

I walked over to him.

“Jimmy,” I said, “where did you get those boots?”

He gave me a startled look. Then he glanced down at them.

“The kicks? Why—why I bought ’em off of a guy in Portland. Why?”

I passed his question.

“How long ago, Jimmy?” I asked.

He flashed me a suspicious look.

“About two weeks ago,” he said.

“Are you sure it wasn’t yesterday, Jimmy?” I asked.

“Say,” he countered, “what are you stiffs trying to do? Hang something on me? I got ’em two weeks ago. I tell you I was unloading freight up there, and a guy came along . . .”

“Never mind that,” I interrupted him. “All I want to know is if you are sure that it wasn’t yesterday or perhaps today?”

Jimmy looked at me for a long time. I could see his brain working like lightning, trying to get the drift of my questions. Finally he gave up and decided to brazen it out.

“No, it wasn’t,” he said. “It was two weeks ago.”

“Well, Jimmy,” I said, and I dug down in my pocket and brought out the heel of a boot—the last layer of







man's son had not been seriously hurt and Jimmy "went over" for burglary only—a short sentence of two years.

As a deputy sheriff led Jimmy out, on his road to the "big house" he stopped long enough to give me one of the most sincere compliments I have ever received in my professional career.

"Nick," he said, "it's a shame you are a dick. You would have made an elegant bank robber. Any guy that can pull what you did on me ought to be able to find a combination of a safe in the dark."

## THE MURDER SCOOP

THERE is a thrill about a murder that halts the processes of the human mind and brings them up sharply like a checkrein on a restive horse. A detective dotes on a murder because there is aroused in him an atomic hate of the man who did it. Tuned, instinctively, to the vibrations of brotherhood, he jangles when this inner instinct is violated. That is why a hue and cry starts so suddenly from small beginnings.

For the newspaper reporter—and I speak advisedly here for that was my occupation before I took that of “detecting”—the murder mystery presents a chance to pit his brains with the best in the business. There is always the hope of catching the murderer before the police—of “beating the world” to the final details. To the credit of the reporter be it said that in a great majority of cases he unearths the bulk of the clues which makes such work successful.

The Broadway “murder” was one such—a chance of a lifetime, thrown in my way by some twist of fate. It was I who found the body, and it was I who unraveled the mystery of it all, amid the creeping shadows of the night. And yet I am not proud of it nor do I say this egotistically. When the case was explained the police were quite willing that I should have full credit for the “catch.” The way of it was this:

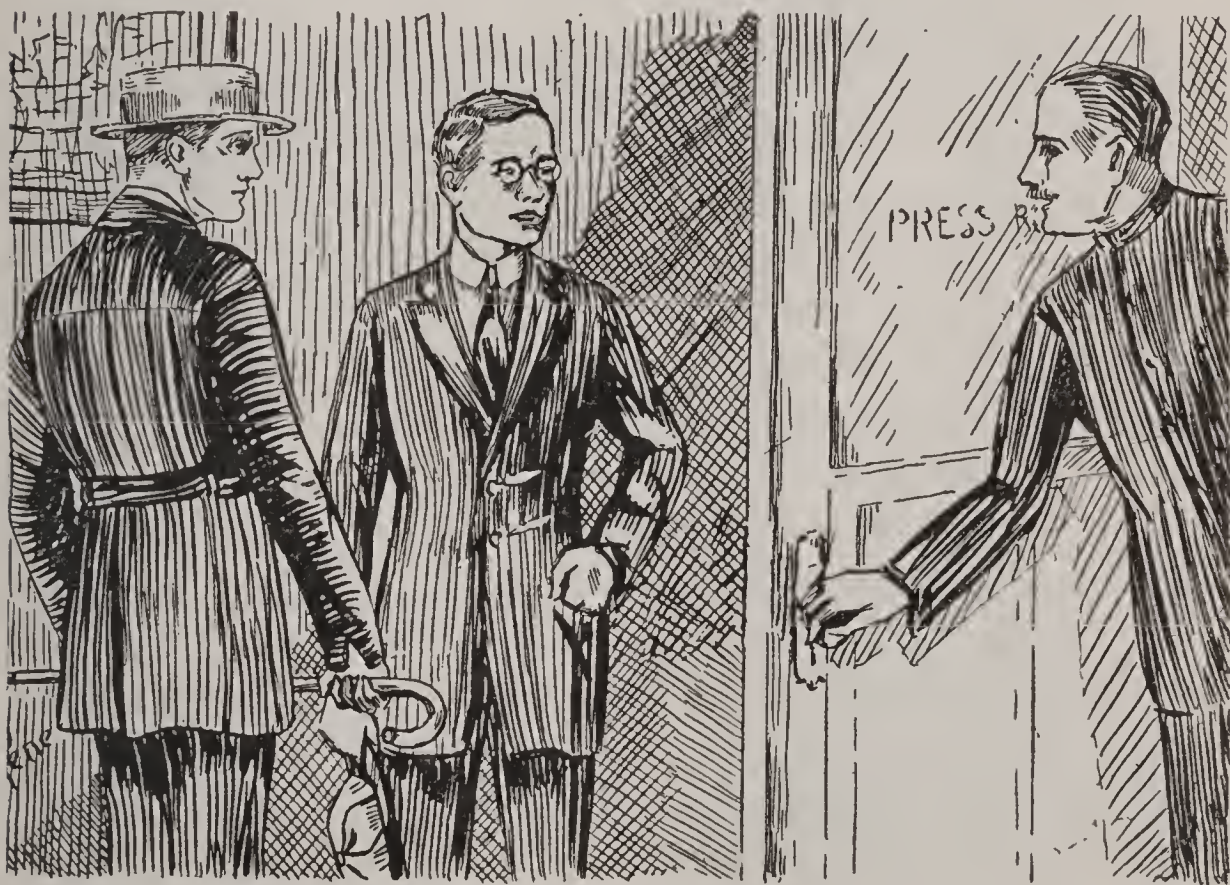
There were three of us on the night trick, as the newspaper detail is called which places a man at police headquarters during the long, weary watches of the night. It had been a “dead night.” Not a wheel had turned.

Not a "stick" of copy had materialized. We might just as well have been guarding the tomb of King "Tut" for all the excitement that abounded. And when midnight came, it was with more than relief that I welcomed the good-natured face of Policeman Phil Polaski as he thrust it through the press-room door.

"Come on, Nick," he said. "Let's be moving."

Polaski usually walked home with me. I lived at the Hotel Louise and his beat lay down Broadway. Nightly we used to take the trip together, chatting about police affairs and things of mutual interest.

It was our custom to try the doors of the various establishments as we went along. Polaski would take one side of the street and I would take the other. When either of us found a door unlocked or anything wrong, we would call the other. Polaski went down on the left side of Broadway and I took the right.



"Are you ready to go, Nick?"



"Better look sharp, Nick," he warned as I crossed to my side of the thoroughfare. "It's been pretty dead for a couple of nights. It's about time for something to pop."

I nodded, thoroughly understanding Polaski's feelings in this regard. For—and this is a fact well known to police and newspapermen—invariably when there has been a period completely free from evil, some garish crime breaks the deadlock, and usually in an unexpected manner. It is as though the human elements had grown suddenly weary of decency and had burst their restraints with a sudden access of tension. There are various names for it, and various phases. The psychologist covers them all when he says "reflexes."

In this frame of mind, we started for my hotel. The night was dark. There had been some power trouble and many of the street lamps were off. Policeman Polaski called over to me.

"Good night for a holdup or a murder, Nick," he said.

"Shut up," I warned. "I want to get to bed without breaking my record for loafing."

There was a tailor shop on the corner of Third street and Broadway, where Grauman's theater now stands—a small hole in the wall. I had seen a little fellow cross-legged in the window, as I passed, day after day. He always seemed busy. Great piles of garments were always heaped beside him on one side to be done. On the other side was another heap all finished. I often found myself wondering if he was condemned by some unknown fate to sit there cross-legged forever and ceaselessly stitch.

His door loomed just ahead. Carelessly I reached out and turned the handle. To my surprise the door gave easily inward, displaying a black, yawning chasm

—the interior of the little tailor shop. There was a saloon right across the street, and I saw Policeman Polaski cross the beam and continue on his way. A warm, moist, stuffy breath of air whiffed in my face from the little shop—an odor compounded of cloth, benzine and musty rags.

I took a step forward, peering into the gloom. It was a foolish thing to do as I realize now. For, lurking in the shadows, standing outlined in the doorway, I made an excellent target for a chance shot. At the moment, however, I was conscious only that the door was unlocked and that within the little shop there was something probably wrong.

There was absolute silence on the streets. Down the block Policeman Polaski rattled the doors of a warehouse—jangling them musically. Raucous laughter from



I leaned forward and touched the face.



a corner saloon cut in. The rest was darkness and the moist, fetid smell from the inside of the shop.

I took another step forward. My foot caught at something on the floor. I leaned forward and touched it. It was the face of a human being—wet and cold!

For perhaps a minute I did not move a muscle while I felt the cold perspiration start out from every pore. Finally I managed to get out a match. The shadows danced eerily as it rasped into brilliancy. Holding it high, I peered down.

The man was lying on his back with his mouth wide open, his arms sprawled wide on the floor. From the whiskers and the general appearance I identified him as the little tailor. That, however, came afterward. At the moment I was conscious only of the ghastly, awful crimson streak across the throat!

The match died in my nerveless fingers. Madly I dashed from the place, shrieking for Policeman Polaski. He came running down the far side of the street, jerking at his revolver.

“What is it, Nick?” he panted, running up.

I told him as best I could, pointing to the little shack. The thing had been a terrible shock to me. He peered at the place darkly, his head cocked on one side, listening. But he did not grow excited. Instead, he grew thoughtful.

“Hum,” he said. “You get headquarters and tell them to bring the coroner.”

I began to get myself together by that time. I looked at my watch. It was just 12:30. I had until 1 a. m. to make the “deadline,” or closing hour of my paper. Furthermore, I had left two of my rivals on duty at the central station, Dishman of the Times, and Oakley of the Herald. If I telephoned police headquarters, they



would get it within a few minutes. If on the other hand, there was some way of working the matter so that Dishman and Oakley would not find it out, my paper would get a "scoop."

"Wait a minute, Phil," I said to Polaski, and explained my dilemma. He nodded.

"Tell you what," he said. "There are a couple of boys from the dicks' bureau down at Hanlon's saloon. They are on their way home. Get them on the telephone there." Leaving Polaski guarding the place where the little tailor lay on his back on the floor, I ran across the street to the saloon whose lights left a yellow streak across the pavement. The telephone was on the end of the bar. The bartender gave me a curious look as I slid a couple of nickels across the bar and called a number. Then he shrugged and went back to his duties.

My first call was to my city editor. In a few words I "flashed" him what had happened.

"Hold the last edition," I said. "I'll clean up on the facts and phone them in. The two dicks won't report to headquarters until tomorrow. We'll get clean away with a scoop."

"Bully for you, Harris," said the city editor enthusiastically. "We'll hold the press."

Then I called Hanlon's saloon. In two minutes more I had told them what I had found in the shack.

"We'll grab a cab and come right down," snapped Detective Joe Ritch.

I hung up the telephone and smiled to myself. Here was a first-class murder, all made to order, with murder and blood and all the sensational elements, and two detectives were on their way, and yet police headquarters and my rivals knew nothing about it. Nor would they until they saw it in print in my sheet. I fairly chuckled

as I crossed the street to where Policeman Polaski paced the sidewalk in front of the little tailor shop.

"They'll be here in a minute," I said. "Did you look inside?"

"I did not," said Polaski. "If anybody comes out, I'll grab 'em, but no pawing around inside for me. Besides, it's a dick's job, anyhow. Let the upper office work on it."

It was a matter of five minutes only when a big machine whirled up to the curb and Detectives Ritch and Hugh Dixon stepped out. Policeman Polaski nodded a greeting.

"I guess they got the little old Jew, all right," he said. "He's on his back with his throat cut!"

Detective Ritch pulled out a flashlight—a police torch—and gun in hand shoved forward and into the little shop. The rest of us crowded in behind him. At the sound of our feet on the floor, the prone figure on floor raised its head and stared at us with a puzzled expression.

"Shay," it said, "whash matter, 'nyhow? Whash doin'? How'd you get in?"

It was my little tailor, drunk as a lord, full in the grip of a private celebration.

"But the blood . . . his throat?"

Detective Dixon leaned up against the door. His eyes went shut, and while I stared at him in amazement he began to laugh. He laughed hilariously, uproariously—laughed until all the bums in the world began to pour out of the saloon across the street to see what was wrong.

"Oh, mamma!" he laughed, the tears rolling down his cheeks. "His throat—Oh, my gosh!"

I leaned forward and peered under the drunken tailor's chin. He had on a bright red necktie!

Right there my big "scoop" ended—blew up, dis-



sipated in smoke. I turned away ashamed. I had been fooled by a drunken tailor with a red necktie. My pride was hurt. Sadly and silently I turned away and went on home—down to my room in the hotel Louise, with the sound of Detective Dixon's laugh ringing in my ears.

I had pulled a "bloomer," as it is expressed in political circles.

In utter humiliation I crawled into bed and pulled the covers over my head. I didn't want even the paper on the wall to see my face. I wanted to forget I was alive.

A violent pounding on my door and the sound of a voice—I sat up in bed abruptly. The light from a street arc shone into the room and by it I read my watch face. Three o'clock! What in the name of—?

"Nick—Nick—open up quick!"

It was a voice I knew. I sprang out of bed, and run-



"Where's that murder story?"



ning to the door flung it back. There, hatless and coatless, was my city editor. On his face was an expression of worry.

"Nick," he shouted, catching me by the arm, "for God's sake, what's happened? Where's that murder story? We are holding the press. I didn't dare phone the central station. What are you doing in bed?"

Shades of Horace Greeley! Oh, sainted shades of Horace Greeley! I had forgotten, I had forgotten—to telephone my editor to restart the presses.

## THE DEATH OF DESDEMONA

**H**AVE you ever been thrilled by the desire to seek lost treasure hidden in the hulk of some sunken ship? Have you sat spellbound, reading Jack London's works, breathlessly tense over a desire to visit the South Seas, thrilled as you were informed how the great Chinese wall was constructed?

Then you can get some idea of my feelings when I sat and listened to a slip of a girl tell me of her life's experience after I had arrested her for passing worthless checks on big merchants of Los Angeles.

I often have wondered what these same merchants would have instructed me to do in her case, had they only known her story. I have been accused of being too lenient with some of these offenders. They said I showed them too much consideration. The courts also were lax. Probation was rampant. "Prosecute more, and probate less," such was the cry.

No one understands better than I the need of strict law enforcement of bad check writers. No one knows better than I how our merchants are made victims of this class of criminals. Yet, let me tell the story of this girl and see if you would have caused her confinement behind the gray walls of San Quentin.

I was called to the office of one of our department store cashiers one Friday afternoon to pick up a check just returned from the bank marked "No account." Upon my arrival the chief clerk said, "Harris, when in the name of common sense are you ever going to stop this girl 'hanging paper'? This makes the fifth check

we have had this month." I looked at the writing and saw it was the same as those cashed at other stores for the past eight weeks. All for amounts of less than \$25, just enough to be annoying, yet they would aggregate a total of several hundred dollars.

"Why blame me?" I answered. "We have warned you against her and her style of working three times already, yet in she walks and your clerks hand her out the cash without a question. If she would ask for a charge account, you would ship her up to your credit section, and get her history from the cradle before you gave her five cents' worth of merchandise, but when she asks for cash, on which you lose 100 per cent, she just flits in, counts the shekels and out she goes."

I made up my mind that, if it was within our power, we would bring her in. In less than a week this beauty had fallen into the trap we set. I arrested her in Bullock's. Miss Eunice Alexander, one of my girl agents in the J. W. Robinson store, had picked her up on description and followed her to Bullock's. She telephoned me that she thought she had the right girl. I answered the call and met Miss Alexander. We trailed her around the store to make sure she was our party and hoped she would try to pass another check. On the third floor she looked over the suits and there tendered a check for \$65. I tipped the clerk to introduce me as the "o.k." man and said I would talk to her, thus getting an opportunity to see the handwriting.

One look was enough. It was our much wanted maid. The name, of course, was different, as usual. In our work this item meant nothing, as we go by certain characteristics of handwriting and style of checks, and various other methods which prompts us to regard the names of Maggie Jones or Bertha Adams as one and the same.



As I placed her under arrest, she said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I think you have made a mistake. I am Margaret Van Alostine, daughter of Charles H. Van Alostine, president of the Traders Bank and Trust Company of Atlanta, Ga."

"I dare say, madam," I answered, "but yesterday you were Harriet Kathern Clement of St. Augustine, Fla., and you will have to come to headquarters."

She smiled and said, "Your pleasure, sir."

Refinement seemed to radiate from her. Her soft voice and pleasant manner almost made us hesitate. Were we right? Had we not confused her with the real offender? Could there be a strange coincidence that handwritings were the same? I called the bank to make sure. I was right. It was Harriet, and Gertrude, and Francis, and Lucile of the past eight weeks.

On the way to jail she asked Miss Alexander what we were going to do with her.

"Better ask Mr. Harris," said Miss Alexander. I told her I would have to put her away for a long time. I asked her where she lived, and she led the way to her apartment on South Figueroa street, where we searched her room and found practically all the merchandise she had obtained in her weeks of check writing. On her dresser I saw the picture of a very handsome man, perhaps past fifty. I asked, "Who is that?" "That's my father," she said. "Whose picture is this other one on the other side of your dresser?" "Please don't ask that now, sir." I picked up the picture and saw scrawled in black ink these words:

"To my Desdemona—I will be waiting for you in the land beyond.

"FRANKLYN"

The picture had been made in a New York studio. I saw big tears well in her eyes, run down her cheeks

and drop on her silken dress, as she bowed her head in shame.

In her trunk I found clippings from the Chicago Tribune, telling of the death of a young New York millionaire. It was a suicide pact. A girl and he had agreed to die together on the sands in front of the Chicago Beach hotel, in the Hyde Park section. They had quarreled. He had married another; he repented and came back to her, and they agreed to die together. He pointed the pistol point blank at her temple. He fired as she bowed her head, and missed. A second shot, and his prostrate form fell across her lap. This was in July, 1917. She was afraid to finish the work he failed to accomplish.

Since that night she had wandered from her home and friends, a derelict on the sea of life. She said Franklyn had written that farewell message on the picture just a few hours before the end. She hoped she would die, now that she had brought disgrace upon her name, but she didn't want to die in jail. If we would only let her go to some beautiful park and there end it all! It was really the pleading of one sincere.

I posted Miss Alexander to watch her, thinking she might attempt suicide while we were searching the room. Miss Alexander tried to console her, as only one girl can do for another. It seemed to have its effect, and we left for the city jail. I felt this was a case for the psychopathic ward, instead of prison, and had her taken to the hospital.

She would not tell us who her father was, other than to say her name was Davis. After several months she was pronounced cured and released from the hospital. She was not prosecuted because of the checks. No one would swear to the complaint.

Over a year passed before I saw her again. I often

had wondered what had become of her, when one day my telephone rang, and a landlady in a cheap rooming house called and said a girl wanted to see me before she died. Accompanied by one of my agents, I hurried to the place, and there found Desdemona propped up in bed and looking very healthy.

"Well, girl, what's the matter? You don't look like you were sick," I asked.

"No, Mr. Harris," she replied, "I am quite well in body, but very ill in mind. I am going to die, and before I go I want to tell you just who I am and ask you to see that I receive proper burial.

"Now, Mr. Harris, I am going to briefly tell you my story. My father and mother were Presbyterian missionaries, stationed in China. There were just two children, my brother and I. We were born in China, just a few miles out of Canton. During the Boxer uprising both my parents were killed. We were carried into the camps of the Boxers and delivered to the high official. There was just a year's difference in the ages of my brother and myself. He was the older. I was 6 and he was 7. We were taken into the back country and put with some coolie family. They were like our guards. We were always watched. Once or twice a month the master would come and see us. He was always kind and good and one day he told us in rich English that we should not fear. He would be our 'papa' now. He kept us seven years. As we grew older he told us that he was a prince, that he had been sent to America to school, and that some day we could all go back. He later became identified with some shipping interests and used to take us on long trips into southern waters. He always told my brother that he was very wealthy and that when he died he would leave us great riches. He also warned us never to speak of the war his



country had, meaning the Boxer uprising, but to say that our father left us with him.

"We really learned to love him. We had never known anything but the Chinese, and quite naturally we now regarded him as our father. He had us educated by a private tutor, and brother and I were inseparable. One day word came to our home that our Chinese 'father' had been drowned. His ship had run into rocks off the eastern coast of the Philippines, and all on board were lost.

"My brother and I, of course, inherited his estate, amounting to several thousands of dollars. We lived in China for several years. Finally brother wanted to come to America. We came. In New York he met a girl whom he later married. Of course I was all broken up, because I had never known anyone but him. He was my protector. I looked up to him as my guiding spirit. When he married I couldn't stand it. I went to Chicago. Soon brother missed me. Trouble came in his family. He left his wife and tried to find me. At last he found trace of me and came on to Chicago. He was a broken man. Life meant nothing for him. His fortune he left with his wife.

"Now, Mr. Harris, you have heard my story. You read the newspaper clippings telling of my death pact with a wealthy New Yorker. You saw the picture on my dresser. You read the writing on it. You remember it said, 'I will be waiting for you in the land beyond,' and was signed Franklyn. Mr. Harris, Franklyn was my brother and not my sweetheart. I have kept this secret all these years, but now that I am going to die, I wanted you to know the truth. My story is ended."

With this final statement the girl closed her eyes as though she was swooning. We could not revive her, and again sent her to the hospital. She recovered, and

I later saw her in the elevator of the Pantages building, when she told me she was working as a stenographer, and that life held new hopes for her. But she hoped, she said, the end would come soon.

Barely a week from that day the lifeless form of a beautiful brunette was found floating in the tide waves near the shore at Long Beach, Cal. The body was identified as that of Desdemona Davis.

One newspaper story said that "her soul was dead." She had written a tearful note to Mrs. H. B. Winter, superintendent of the Minnie Barton Hall. Such was the life story, as I knew it, and the death of Desdemona.

## “A MASS OF GOLDEN HAIR”

PERHAPS there is no subject, more appropriate this time that I could write about than to tell the story connected with the case of one of the most notorious dope fiends this country ever had within its domain; just at this time when our government, both city and state and nation, are spending millions in trying to stamp out this deadly drug evil.

Headlines of our daily press call the attention day after day in glaring letters of how some notable has fallen victim of the shining needle, or the molasses colored essence of the once beautiful poppy blossom. Could all of us, while in our right mind, see the suffering and misery of these fallen wretches, we would bend every effort within our power to get behind the movements of civic and social bodies interested in stamping the heel of disapproval on the face of this dastardly habit, created sometimes as a result of trying to ease the pain in time of sickness and other times as a result of some strange whim, causing one to try the opium pipe just once to realize the oft-told tales of wonderful dreams said to encourage our weary minds when all else has failed.

My tale starts years ago when I was doing special writing on one of the metropolitan papers and which goes to show this same present day war on dope sellers was not overlooked even at that time.

I had just turned to my city editor a story of the death of a beautiful young girl, whose body was found in a cheap lodging house on Wall street. I picked this



case off the records at the receiving hospital. The doctors said, "Overdose of morphine." Such was the ending of this child when my editor apparently touched by the circumstances surrounding the girl's death, turned to me and said: "Nick, I want a story on local dope conditions. I want you to go for a week if necessary and mingle with some known dope fiends and find out who is supplying these creatures with this stuff, or from what source it is coming into Los Angeles and by the heavens above, if this paper can't blow them up, they will at least know we are going after them."

The way he seemed to grit his teeth and slam his fist on the table, inspired me with a desire to lend my bit, to get the real "low down" as we call it in newspaper slang and it implanted in my very soul a spirit of hate against these sellers which to these days has never abated.

Having for some time past been detailed at Central station on the police beat working with Edward Dishman of the Times and Frank Oakley of the Herald, which by the way was then a morning paper and Los Angeles had not yet seen the advent of the Examiner, I had occasion many times to run into some of the well known dope users and just about knew where most of them hung out.

However, one of my guiding spirits and advisers in those days was Detective Sergt. Charles Moffitt and who in the present day police circles is still actively connected with the department, having filled the positions of lieutenant and acting captain of the bureau. He was also a writer of California and nature stories of no mean ability, dealing with many subjects that would be of great value to me on my recent detail.

"Mr. Moffitt, will you give me just a pointer or two on where I can get the best start in digging up this

story?" I asked. "You know some of the mob but I thought you could tell me better how to mix with them or where to begin."

"My boy," he said, "listen," as he stopped writing some reports and leaned back in the swivel chair. "Do you realize what you are trying to get into? It is the most dangerous and difficult problem this department has to deal with. I say it is dangerous and I mean both in a police way and from your own health standpoint."

"You say your editor wants you to live the life. No! No! He didn't mean that for he could not expect such a sacrifice. But if you will promise me that you will not even so much as touch an opium pipe to your lips or let a hypodermic needle touch your flesh, I will tell you where you can get some wonderful copy for your paper."

Almost on bended knees I promised, so great was the warning he had pictured to me. "Then, Harris, with that assurance, I will tell you to go to (for the purpose of the story, we will call it Sullivan's saloon on North Alameda street) not far from Shault and try and get a job as porter or glass washer behind the bar. Watch the gang that hangs around the back room for, at times, we have suspected this as a dope center. However, it seems that all of our men, perhaps because they look too much like policemen, have never been able to get on the inside. But remember your promise."

"I shall, Mr. Moffitt," I answered and shook his hand warmly to bind the bargain.

Next morning I told my landlady that I would be gone for perhaps a week. I dug up my last year's suit, my oldest shoes and last summer's straw hat. I did not shave that morning and went out in the backyard and smeared my face with dirt. I even left my glasses on

the dresser and my disguise was perfect. Now for Sullivan's saloon.

To all the world, fifteen cents was my financial standing, and as I opened the swinging doors leading to the saloon, I sauntered up to the bar and dropped a nickel on the mahogany top. Without asking, a mug of beer was shoved across to me. Sipping a couple of swallows, I looked for the free lunch, munched on some pretzels, head cheese and pickles until I could get the lay of the land, so to speak. Another round of beer and a round of food offerings until the bartender asked me "if I hadn't had breakfast." Fate was kind to me for it gave me an unexpected opening; a chance to spring my story on the boss himself.

"Mister," I said, "that's the first thing I have eaten today." "Well, why didn't you buy coffee and sinkers?" he unexpectedly shot back at me. I was knocked for a goal right off the bat—and coming from a saloon-keeper. He diverting cash from his own coffers. I rallied and said, "You know you can get but three sinkers and a cup of coffee for a dime and that's all I got and I knew I could eat my head off here if you were busy." This wise crack seemed to please Sullivan and he tossed a quarter over the bar and said, "Kid, go get your breakfast."

Oh, what a white aproned angel he was. If he could only have been selling shoes or talcum powder or groceries instead of liquor, I could have landed him on the front page of my paper, as a philanthropic citizen, but as it was I just had to pick up the quarter and tell him a long sad story of my being out of a job and wanting work. Again fate was good to me.

"What kind of a job do you want?" he asked. "What can you do?" I said: "Once I jerked soda back in Joplin, Mo., and used to sweep the floors," and if he



would give me a job, I felt sure I could help him with the trade. "Kid," he said, "this is no job for a youngster. Go up town and work in a dry goods store." "I have tried all this week," I answered, "but no luck"; and I guess I touched his heart for he told me to hang up my hat and sweep the joint and the sidewalk.

Readers, may I not say right here, that during the next few days I had a chance to study this chap and I never met a more kind and better hearted fellow in the world. If the doing away of saloons caused nothing better, it at least sent this specimen of fine manhood into better vocations and today this man is one of the most loved and respected hotel keepers in Los Angeles.

It wasn't but a few days before I was well acquainted with the regular customers and had my dope well sized up. I had noticed on several occasions a rather stately, high-class man of about sixty years of age come into the rear room. He was a physical wreck; his eyes were gaunt; his cheeks were sunken, and the unmistakable twitching was forever playing across his once fine features. His gray hair was unkempt; yet with all this one could detect the indelible marks of refinement beneath the drug-wrecked surface.

I asked Sullivan who this man was and he replied that they just called him "the Mystery Man" around there. "I don't even know his name, and he has been coming here for the past three years. He meets the doctor, gets his medicine, sits around for awhile and then goes out. That's all we know about him."

The doctor! I wondered—did he have his headquarters here and was he feeding the dopes in the little back room? Then I thought Sullivan, the fellow who had befriended me must be in on the deal, too, for he was the owner. Would he not fall in the crash when I broke the story? That was the one thing that affected me, for,

after his sincere kindness, I must break him, too. He had been like a father to me and I decided to ask him what his connection was. He would not suspect me.

"Mr. Sullivan, tell me, why does this doctor meet the snowbirds here?" I ventured this while I was polishing some glasses and he was sorting the cash. He half turned around and answered. I fancied I could see a trace of sorrow across his chubby face, "Pretzel," he said (that's the nickname he gave me), "I would like to see that bird landed in Leavenworth (federal prison) but my hands are tied and the cops at headquarters have been trying to land him for years. He has been supplying these people and stands big with certain politicians so that if I dared to squeal on him, he is just that powerful that he could frame on me and I would lose my license."

This was sure juicy pickings for me. Cocaine and morphine was this doctor's stock in trade. For the sake of his descendants I will call him Russell. That night I conferred with Moffitt and Capt. A. J. Bradish in charge of police detectives, and it was decided that a raid would be made and that Sullivan would be kept in the dark.

Sullivan's saloon was located in the heart of the tenderloin district just far enough from Main street so one could hear the clanging of the street car bells and near enough from Chinatown to receive the rank odors from these sections. The stage was all set and it was a real *coup d'etat*. The drizzle of a belated California rain sparkled around the arc lights like dancing diamond dust. The blue curling cigar smoke was circling to the ceiling, filling the eyes of four detectives watching through little holes which had been bored that afternoon.

Seated in this back room around a rough board table were at least seven victims and peddlers of this dreaded stuff, waiting for Doc. Russell to bring them their usual supply. Among the gathered group was my Mystery Man—the man of yesterday, the shadow of to-day. His silence seemed to cast a gloom over the party, when one of the younger peddlers turned to this derelict and said: “Dad, old top, brace up. As soon as Doc. comes you’ll feel like a million.” The old man slowly turned to the speaker, and in a trembling voice and looking with eyes that awaited the luster of a new “shot” answered: “My boy, I am very sad. I guess I am getting tired and there is nothing much left for me. I don’t think I will wait for Doc. I’d better be going.”

Never on any stage were any lines more dramatically spoken. He started to rise from his chair when one of the curious of the crowd placed his arm around the old man’s shoulder and abruptly asked why he felt so sad. “Tell us, dad—tell us the story of how you happened to go this route.”

A new life seemed to take hold of this old soul. A new fire seemed to burn in his deep-set eyes when he said, “I will, my friends, and may it do you youngsters some good.” And this is what he told them:

“I am going to tell you the history of my life. I will tell it as the poets of old would. I will give it as this life has unfolded it to me. I will call it:

### “‘A MASS OF GOLDEN HAIR’

*“You ask me now to tell you of my life in happy dreams.  
You want to know, I guess, just how this old world seems  
To one who’s used the needle and smoked the fragrant weed,  
That sprouts out yellow blossoms which supply the hophead’s  
needs.”*



*So let me tell my story in my simple little way,  
That you may understand it and know the price we pay.  
I'll start from the beginning and lift the hazy veil  
And tell it as I learned it and utter not a wail.*

*"I was born away from trouble, in a little country town.  
I went to church and school, the latter painted brown.  
I met the sweetest little girl, just like all others do.  
I little thought, in after years, this tale could e'er come true.  
Her golden curls had won me, from the time I saw her first.  
I swore then I would love her and protect her from the worst.  
I, like other fellows, had played the childish pranks  
That sometimes have bad endings and annoy the village cranks.*

*" 'Twas one of these that started me along this fatal path.  
You see my father caught me and whipped me with a lath.  
Now that should be a lesson to a lad in tender years,  
Instead of causing misery and mothers many tears.  
But I just ran away from home and to a city came.  
I found out all there was to learn in this most rotten game.  
I soon was broke and hungry and not a friend I knew,  
So started out to get a job, a career I had to hew.*

*"I landed as a messenger in an office in the slums.  
I soon became acquainted with all the crooks and bums.  
I little thought what this would mean to me, yet but a kid,  
To live in this wide-open town that never had a lid.  
I worked at nights in bright lights gay, among these fallen crea-  
tures  
Who knew the life as no one else, and all its awful features.  
I saw the life I can't describe and to you I can tell  
All the things that happened then and sent most all to Hell.*

*"I soon became a fixture there and thought that I was smart.  
I knew the Dago on the street, who ran the peanut cart.  
I knew the girls in flimsy dress who called me 'Little Joe.'  
They used to kid me every night and said I was their 'beau.'  
They gave me ties at Christmas time and sometimes bought me  
shoes,  
When I would run their errands or bring to them their booze.*

*"Oh, yes, and I remember the Salvation Army Lass  
Who used to sell the War Cry, which fought the fatal glass.  
She traveled through these sin-filled streets and seemed to know no  
fear,  
Yet through these crowds she wandered and tried to bring good  
cheer.  
Would that I had listened to the words she had to say,  
I now would be a better man instead of broken clay.*

*"The almond eyes of Chinatown would hold me in their grasp,  
Until one fatal night in June I sure was in their clasp.  
I rolled a pill—'twas just in fun, to see what it would do,  
I burned it o'er the little flame as they had told me to.  
I puffed upon the dirty pipe until I was asleep,  
I dreamed of sunken gardens, yes, they seemed a full mile deep.  
A thousand diamonds glistened here, like dew upon the grass,  
I saw my village sweetheart, with her golden hair amass.*

*"I called to her in ecstasy to look, that I was here,  
She turned and smiled and told me I was just her dear.  
She said that we'd get married and have a little home  
In this garden spot of ages and have it all our own.  
Then an angel from the Heavens flew down close by our side.  
She joined our hands in marriage and with happiness she cried:  
'Go forth, my gentle children, to this land that knows no tears,  
And live the life you've longed for until old age creeps in years.'*

*"Just then my dream was ended, I was startled by a scream,  
A crashing door, a bluecoat, a familiar form, was seen.  
'Twas Lee, the Chink, who ran the joint, he sprawled upon the  
floor.  
The copper's fist had leveled him when he crashed against the  
door.  
The harness bull was standing and looking all around,  
He called to Lee to tell him if the girl was under ground.  
I saw him draw his pistol as the Chink reached for his knife,  
I saw Lee get upon his knees and beg to spare his life.*

*"He led the way to a darkened room and told him she was there,  
And when they brought her past me, I saw the golden hair.  
I made one jump and landed away out from my bunk,  
I reeled and tried to hold my feet, but it seemed that I was drunk;*

*Yet my head was clear and I seemed to know that I had left my  
bed,  
I called to them to stop and wait and tell me, was she dead.  
They went right on and let me stand and didn't seem to care  
That I had known that little girl with the mass of golden hair.*

*"You see, I used to write to her and she knew what I meant when  
I told her how I loved her and what a life I spent.  
Next day I learned the awful truth of what had come to pass,  
Of how my village sweetheart had waited till the last.  
Of how she wandered into town to find me if she could,  
And help me lead a better life and bring out all the good.*

*"And when she couldn't find me I guess she lost her way,  
They said she hit the dope route and, like others, had to pay.  
They buried her away up state, in that little country town  
Where childhood days were happy and the school was painted  
brown.*

*"You asked me now why I don't stop and lay off of the stuff,  
For I should know my life is dead and I am just a bluff.  
Why, man alive, I only live to go back to my den  
And hit the pipe and dream of her and dream of what might  
have been.  
Why, man, I long to see again that garden of the gods  
I told you of a while ago that had the diamond pods.  
Where the angel came and joined our hands and where my love  
was born.  
Yes, man, that's where I want to stay till Gabriel blows his horn.*

*"Or would that God would take me now, and tear me from this  
weed  
That's caused such Hell and sorrow and bears its filthy seed,  
That I may make amends to Him and pray Him to forgive my sins  
Of other days, and a new life let me live.  
So don't feel hard if I must leave and have to say good-bye,  
Because I want just one more dream like that before I die.  
For my little pal still waits for me, I think I see her there,  
Away up with the angels with that mass of golden hair."*



And when he finished a smile was on his face, his form crumpled in the chair and fell over on the table. It was a sermon I'd never heard before. The doctor came. No, not Russell, but another, who said he was dead. The gang singled out; their eyes were damp. Yes, just as damp as the windows outside and the sidewalks. And so were mine and those of the coppers upstairs. The raid wasn't made that night but a lesson was taught. I hope that God forgave him. I hope he will see her there—away up there with those angels with her mass of golden hair.

## JUST A LITTLE DOG

PERHAPS you have read of animal stories featuring the faithfulness of dogs. Perchance you saw the recent motion picture, "The Silent Call," in which that dumb animal featured there seemed to do everything but speak, and after you left the theatre you wondered perhaps if, after all, it was only fiction.

This tale is going to deal with just a common little woolly dog and its connection with one of the most dastardly murders in the police annals of Los Angeles.

This story is culled from certain facts uncovered by an investigation resulting in the man hunt for the supposed murderers, and how this little cur dog played a most prominent part in causing the arrest of this fiend in human flesh, and how this little dog spent its life and won the love and hatred of these selfsame guardians of the law who had charge of this murder mystery investigation.

Perhaps this story will call to mind your early boyhood days when you, yourself, had picked up some stray pup, and how you had cared for and cherished it as though it was part of your very life. So let me tell the facts as I, myself, saw them while detailed as a police reporter on the Daily Journal many years ago.

I was seated in the private office of Captain A. J. Bradish, who was then in charge of the detective bureau in Los Angeles, when he received a phone call from a patrolman on the North Alameda street beat who stated that a murder had been committed and to send some detectives down to look it over. The officer said it looked

like a "Cholo" job, as the dead body was covered with stab wounds. Bradish called Detective Sergeant Manuel B. Leon, one of Los Angeles' Spanish speaking officers and detailed him to take up the case and report his findings. Leon seeing me sitting with Bradish said: "Come on, kid, there may be a good story for you here." I looked at Bradish. He nodded his approval and off we started. In those days autos had not yet become famous, so we jumped into a slow horse driven patrol wagon and bounded over the cobbled streets.

Now, let me say just a word about Leon. He was born in Tucson, Ariz., of Spanish parentage, and from childhood had sort of a craving to be a police officer. His father died when he was ten years old and he was left to help his mother raise the family. Knocking around these western states and mixing with the police and gun men of those stirring early days he had developed into one of the shrewdest natural born detectives in the great southwest.

I always seemed to feel, while in his presence, that this fellow knew the tricks of the Mexican criminal element better than anyone else on the detective detail, and I knew if this was a Mexican job I would sure get some big copy for the morning paper that I represented.

We found upon arrival a crowd gathered in front of a little blue front shanty in which for years Anthony Brogg had conducted a little sausage shop. Reports had often been circulated that Brogg was a miser and kept hordes of money hidden about his place. When we entered the shack we found poor old Brogg stretched out on the floor amidst scattered counters and shelving, clutching in his hand the bladed end of a Spanish dagger. His fingers were almost severed where he had grasped the wicked instrument which evidently had been used by his





Clutched in his hand was the bladed end of a dagger!

murderers in snuffing out his life and which he had wrested from them in his last fighting strength.

It was here the generalship of Bradish had shown itself because he had picked Leon for the job. Now, any other ordinary Yankee copper would have had to work at a disadvantage to unravel a Mexican murder job, but with Leon it was second nature. His eyes sparkled as he looked at me and bent back the already stiffened fingers of Brogg and pried the dagger from their clutches.

"Nick," he said, "'Cholo,' it looks like the forgotten clue.'"

Those days finger printing had not yet come into its own, so he had to depend upon the science of the time and dig out of the mass of wreckage the bare facts as were produced by the investigation. Fourteen distinct cuts were discovered, any one of which would have been sufficient to have caused death. After a careful search we were unable to find any other evidence that might lead

to the identity of the criminals. However, we found two small well worn bags that plainly showed what the old man had kept his savings hidden in.

With a few instructions to the officer and leaving the body in charge of a deputy coroner, we left the place and proceeded back to central station to report to Captain Bradish the facts as were uncovered. It was then that I asked the captain if I could work with Leon, if I would agree not to publish any of the details he uncovered until he gave his consent. Bradish gave me another nod of approval and I hastened to my office and wrote the preliminary story up to that time and received from my city editor instructions to stay with Leon until the finish.

By noon, Leon and I were delving into the mystery he had been directed to solve, and over a table in a Latin quarter restaurant we discounted all the unimportant facts we had found, and, between a course of soup and spaghetti which had been served to us in a curtained booth, Leon drew from his inside pocket a blood-stained dagger he had carefully wrapped in brown paper. Examining this carefully, he found on the silvered edge of its elk horn handle an inscription that made this even keeled detective almost jump from his seat. "Nick, look, I believe we got the dope," he said, as he passed the weapon to me and pointed to the inscription engraved in Spanish letters. He translated it as being as follows: To Concepcion Becinto De Lugo, your friend, General Francisco Santa Ana.

The De Lugo family was as famous in the history of early California as those of the Del Valles, Sepulvedas, Picos and other noted Spanish families whose ancestors came from Spain with Don Portola and afterward lived under the regime and teachings of the old Spanish padres, led by Father Junipero Serra.

It took only a minute for Leon to grasp the impor-



tance of this event, and he said: "Nick, cut the food and let's get out of here. We must get busy and find how this knife got out of the Lugo family's possession." We paid our bill, rented a horse and buggy and drove to the old hacienda of the Lugos who owned a large tract of land not far from Los Angeles; yet it took us all afternoon to reach our destination.

We were met at the entrance of the property by little Juan, whose mother was a Lugo, and when we told him of our mission and Leon said he wanted to see his mother, we were ushered into a large adobe home, and after being greeted, were asked if we had as yet had our supper, which was later served to us in that very hospitable style peculiar to the ancient Californians.

When Leon showed this dear old lady the dagger, tears came into her eyes and she said: "Senor, that has been in our family for the past seventy years and was given to my father by General Santa Ana as a token of his friendship and good will. It has hung there on our wall as the one cherished memento of our family. Where did you get it? But it was not rusted like it is now." She fondly caressed it and started to repolish the silver blade, when Leon jumped to his feet and gallantly as possible took it from her, explaining that that was not rust, but human blood and must be retained as a matter of evidence to be used against the murderer. With a scream and a shudder, Mrs. Fezenda shrank from the instrument, saying in Spanish: "My God, Senor, what do you mean?" "That's just it, Mrs. Fezenda," said Leon, "that's why we are here. How did it get out of your possession?" "Por Dias Anego, Senor. You don't mean to insinuate that some of my people have committed murder?" "No, no, my dear lady," answered Leon, and then he told her of the Brogg murder, and how we found the knife clutched in the stiffened fingers of the corpse. The fire



of Castile seemed to burn in the eyes of this old soul as she looked from one to the other of us, and grasping both arms of her chair, she said: "Gentlemen, the blood of the Lugos must be avenged; the family honor has been insulted; the gift of Santa Ana has been desecrated." And turning to her family, she arose from her chair and, in as stately a fashion as was ever assumed by Mary, Queen of Scots, she said: "My children, you have heard what I said. It is now your duty to aid and assist this officer in bringing to justice the one who has brought the stain upon our good name."

Little Juan, who was then but a lad in his teens, jumped to his mother's side and said: "Mamma, I know who stole that dagger, it was Castro." Leon and I both grabbed the boy and said: "Who is Castro?" As I had been so intense with interest as I had listened to the elderly lady and pictured the old Spanish traditions that seemed to radiate from her as she spoke, I had most forgotten where we were until little Juan's remark had brought me to my senses, and I, too, repeated: "Who is Castro?" Castro, Jose Castro, had for a long time been a "Cholo" ranch hand employed by the Fezendas and, according to Juan, had suddenly left the place about two weeks before, and with his going the silver dagger was missing. Juan said that Castro had a friend in Sonora town named Jose Rodriguez. Sonora town, by the way, was the Mexican quarter of Los Angeles. Rodriguez had often called at the ranch for Castro and they would come back to Los Angeles to spend the Mexican holidays. Leon knew Rodriguez, and perhaps there we could find Castro. He was his only friend.

Thanking the family for their friendliness and kindness to us, we bade them adieu and started back to the city of Los Angeles. We arrived there close to midnight.

With Leon, sleep meant little. I was able to grab a

snooze or two on the way in, and when the lights of the city loomed before us, I was much refreshed and ready to start on the trail of our quarry.

We went direct to Rodriguez's home, and after awakening him, rushed into his quarters, thinking perhaps Castro might still be there, but he was not. Leon turned to Rodriguez and, after a hurried conversation in Spanish, the startled and blinking Mexican told Leon that Castro had been there but left the night before and had told him that he was going to Barstow, and from there to Arizona. Rodriguez knew better than to mislead or lie to Leon, who was looked up to and regarded as a superhuman being by his element in this district. However, I said to Leon, when he told me what Rodriguez had said: "Don't you think he is giving you the wrong steer?"

"No, Nick, I have known Rodriguez for a long time and he knows better than to lie to me, and besides he is a good 'Cholo,' never been pinched and has worked for the railroad companies many years. Our trail now leads to Barstow; do you want to go?" Did I want to go? I would just as leave quit my job as to quit good old Leon at this time.

If autos had only been in vogue then, what it would have meant to us that midnight! Leon phoned the Southern Pacific railroad office and found that no passenger trains would leave until morning, but that a freight was pulling out at 1 a. m., loaded with lemons for the east, and was considered fast and would get us into Barstow some four hours before the next passenger train left. It was no trick for Leon to arrange with the conductor to let us ride in the caboose. With what time we had to put up our horse and get to the depot we could just about make it. Fate was good to us and we did make the train. Arriving at Barstow, Leon left me at the depot, as he started to make inquiries in the Mexican section of this

border desert town. It was not long before he returned and said: "Nick, it looks like the desert for us, and I am afraid you can't stand the trip. You had better stay here until I get this bird and I will meet you here tomorrow." Again the shades of Horace Greeley danced before me. Me a reporter hot on the trail of the murderer and quitting the job because of some dried up sand dunes. Not me. I pleaded and begged to be allowed to continue. Finally, I won, but he said I would have to change my clothes for some that he could borrow from a friend who was going to loan him some pack mules and an outfit.

In just another hour we were decked out in desert togs and had packed supplies and water and had started. Much has already been written about the sufferings of prospectors under the hot desert suns, so I will pass over that part of the trip which lasted all day, and it is not pleasant to recount a tenderfoot's experience on his first trip of this kind with little or no time for real preparation. Suffice to say that we surely suffered enough. We could see in the distance a low range of hills, and like the often told mirages we fancied we would find there some hidden oasis. We figured we would reach these hills by nightfall and like the sheik pitch our camp for the night. Time meant lots for us, as Leon related to me as we crossed those hot sands, how his friends in Barstow had told him that they had seen a man answering Castro's description outfit himself with a mule, and how he said he was going to prospect for gold in Death Valley, made famous in later years by the notorious Scotty.

We tracked this line animal and the footprints of a man all that day, and at dusk weary and tired stopped to rest and make supper. The only other time we had stopped was shortly after noon and I guess we did not fully realize what the second stop would mean. After giving the burros water and fodder we proceeded to feed



ourselves. I guess I overfed myself, and, coupled with the traveling, I became quite sick. I tried to prevent Leon from seeing my condition. As he started to break camp I pulled myself together and attempted to get on my feet but fell over. Leon gave me one look and pulled that old story title: "I told you so." I was too sick to answer him back. "Well, kid," he said, "I knew you could not stand this stuff." But, like the big brother he was, he bathed my head in the cool water we had carried in the ollas, packed up our burros and asked me if I thought we could make the hills before we stopped for the night. It was only about two miles farther on. I tried again to start but could not. This worried Leon and he said we would stay here all night, and he then proceeded to unpack the animals and make camp. As the cool of the evening came on I seemed to feel better, having being propped up with part of the pack outfit, while Leon started rolling a cigarette and became very quiet, only interrupting the stillness of the evening by asking me now and then if I was feeling better. Suddenly out from the starlit sky, peculiar to the desert conditions, he saw something that made him jump to his feet and drag out his .44 and assume a kneeling position. He called to me to look. There, about 200 yards from us between the hills and our camp was a form of some small black object cautiously approaching us. We could see the two little bead like eyes sparkling in the night as the little form drew closer. "Looks like a skunk, Nick," Leon said, "but it sure is a long way from home out here." Fearing what might happen if this little creature were disturbed Leon started to advance toward it, either hoping to scare it off or kill it before it came too close to our camp. Personally, I did not care much what it was, having the same feeling one has aboard a storm-tossed ship while undergoing a good case of seasickness.

I noticed, however, Leon was just raising his right arm and about to take aim with the old trusty shooting iron when the little animal let out a series of faint barks. It was a dog, just a little black woolly dog. Instead of stopping it came slowly forward, its little frame wobbling from side to side and its tongue hanging out as though it was pitifully begging for water. "Don't kill it, Leon," I said, "perhaps it is lost." Then, again, I knew just how that little brute felt. Was I not in the same fix just a short time before. "Don't worry, Nick, I won't," answered this big hulk of humanity who had so tenderly nursed me back to life a few minutes ago. The little thing kept coming and letting out short yelps at every step. Leon rushed out to pick it up and brought it into our stopping place. He gave it a little water and a few strings of jerked meat, which for several minutes it refused to eat. It just laid down and panted and looked at both of us as though trying to tell us its story.

I guess perhaps an hour passed while Leon tried to nourish the little cur before it finally got up to its feet and started howling and barking and started off in the direction from which it came, only to return again and repeat these antics several times, always barking and trying to tell us something. Leon knowing better than I, the call of nature, said: "Nick, I think this dog belongs to some one who has lost his way and having the animal instinct it has come to us for aid for its master. I guess I had better follow it and see what it wants." By this time I had revived considerably and told him I guessed I could make the hills now all right, so we packed up our stuff and followed this dumb, yet intelligent brute. His path led us on over the sands and around and into a small canyon of this low range of hills that skirts the border of the Mojave desert. At the mouth of this canyon stood the form of a bewhiskered man perhaps some sixty years



"Howdy, folks! Are you lost?"

of age whom some would call a desert rat but in reality he was a prospector bronzed with the sun and winds, and spoke with a voice, cracked with the desert heat so characteristic of this tribe of humanity who seek the solitary seclusion of the hills in search of God's hidden treasures.

"Howdy, friends," he said, as he proffered his outstretched hand. "Are you all lost?" "Not exactly," answered Leon, "but I got a sick boy on my hands and we had just started to the valley but I am afraid he cannot make it. You see he is a tenderfoot from New York and is studying to be a mining engineer and his folks sent him to me to teach him the part of mining he cannot learn in college." I looked at Leon and marveled at his quick wit and ability to alibi us as I realized then he figured that our friend Castro might also be a friend of our new host. I took the cue at once and kept my mouth shut.

The old man asked us into his roughly built cabin, which to our surprise nestled under some trees. It was



a real oasis there on the edge of the desert hidden from view around the corner of this mystery canyon. I have thought so many times since how many poor souls have passed the spot, yet so near but unknown to them.

Leon clutched my arm and said in a whisper as the old man led the way to his cabin: "We may find Castro here but don't let on we are after him." I knew what he meant and resolved to play my part as a college student. As we entered the shack we saw in a dimly lighted room the form of a man crouched in a corner who eyed us suspiciously as we entered. He did not seem to be a bit glad to see us. It was our man we were sure, but not certain.

The old man told us to make ourselves at home and said we were the third persons his little "Pansy" had brought in off the desert in the last two days. He nodded his head in the direction of the silent figure in the corner as the other victim. He told us how he had watched every day for straggling prospectors and had trained his little "Pansy" to go forth and bring them in as a child had trained his pet to go after a thrown stick.

He said: "You know 'Pansy' is all I have left. When my wife died I felt I never again wanted to see the crowds in the streets, so I just gathered together what I would need as a prospector, took 'Pansy,' who was then only a pup, and came out here. I guess she has saved more lives than any living dog today. I have been here now six years, stranger, and all the gold I could dig would not be enough to buy that hound." As he was talking, "Pansy" just lay at his feet with her head between her paws, and when the old man called her name the little black bunch of fur got up and barked as much as to say, "What do you want me to do now?" He said he had named her "Pansy" because that was his wife's favorite flower. Now, it is not hard to imagine how we

felt toward "Pansy" after she had delivered us out of that desert waste just a short time before.

Leon then unrolled our blankets and I soon fell asleep listening to the old man talk of his dog to Leon.

Next morning I noticed that Leon looked tired and worn out. I afterward found out that he had not slept at all that night, ever watching the sleeping form of the third stranger. Reluctantly, this fellow joined us at breakfast and then we saw he was our "Cholo." He, too, had lost his way and welcomed the haven given him by our host. Leon talked a little to him in Spanish, gradually trying to draw him out as to who he was and where he was going. He said he was going to work in a borax mine out here and had lived in Barstow a long time. We were still sure that he was Castro, yet our description might fit any of a hundred of his caste. Then again, to take him back across the sands and find he was not the man wanted meant certain disgrace to this man hunter, which he would likely not countenance.

I will pass over the following three hours we spent trying in every conceivable way to satisfy ourselves that he was Castro, when suddenly the latter got up from his chair and something dropped on the floor beside him. Leon reached down, picked it up and was about to hand it to him when he saw it was a silver scabbard. The Mexican's eyes flashed. He was about to draw something from the front of his shirt, but my trusted pal was too quick for him. In the twinkling of an eye Leon had him covered with a revolver he always carried under his left armpit, commanding him in Spanish to throw up his hands and turn around. He was now facing me. "Nick," said Leon, "get his gat; it is in his shirt front." This was my first play at this game and I guess this "Cholo" knew it, as I was shaking like a leaf. However, I got the gun and Leon made him put his hands behind

him as he slipped the old style handcuffs over his wrists.

We both then made a careful search of his person, but could not find any of Brogg's money. As for our man, he was Castro, for there engraved in Spanish on the silver scabbard were the greetings from General Santa Ana to Senor Lugo. We searched the pack from Castro's mule and there found nearly every dollar of Brogg's money, some three thousand in all.

All that was to follow was to return with our prisoner. We had cleared the good name of the Lugos. We were about to avenge the desecration of Santa Ana's gift. We could make Castro pay the price demanded by society for taking the life of a fellow-man.

Now, if I could end my narrative here just like in after years all of the interesting movies do, perhaps my readers would be well pleased, but, my friends, it is not in the cards. Life outside story book fiction is different, as truth often plays queer pranks, just so here. I must finish my story as it happened. I must tell more of little "Pansy" because after all it is around this little dog I am writing my story.

Realizing as we did, to start from the old man's place at noon would mean that we would have to camp all night on the desert with our prisoner, Leon decided it would be better to stay here all night and leave early next morning. Each of us took turns the following night watching Castro.

As the first rays of light crept over the horizon we bade our prospector friend a most fond adieu, and assured him that if at any time he ever came to Los Angeles he would always find us and a hearty welcome at police headquarters. We gave "Pansy" a few parting pats and told her owner to be sure to bring her along, too. With our prisoner in front of us we started on our way, arriving in Barstow about 4:00 o'clock that afternoon. We



wired Captain Bradish that we had captured our man and would arrive in Los Angeles at 11:00 that night. The result of our case is a matter of public record. The last I heard, Castro was still serving a life sentence. However, two years later, fate again interceded. It was one of those California nights. A slight drizzling rain was falling over the city. As Leon and I had just returned from lunch about 11:00 p. m., and were going up the sidewalk about half a block from central station, we noticed a small canvas covered wagon drawn by two small burros, stop in front of the station and a man leave his seat and enter the building. As he did so, an officer whose name at this time I will not mention, came out of the detective office, walked over to the wagon and started to lift up the canvas covering. Just then a little black dog started barking at him from the side of the wagon, and when the officer slapped at the dog it jumped from the seat to the sidewalk and snapped at the officer's leg. After a second's hesitation, the officer drew his revolver and shot the animal on the spot. Its little form crumpled to the ground and a crimson stream trickled down the wet sidewalk. We were by this time not ten feet from the spot.

Leon gave him one look and said to his fellow officer: "You damned coward, it's men like you that cause the average citizen to hate and despise us coppers and if I were your chief I would fire you for what you have just done." Leon dared not stay longer, as he feared his wrath would get the best of him and I, too, decided to leave and intended to roast him in a story in the morning for his apparently brutal action of a moment before.

As I was about to enter the building the old man just came out of another entrance, and when he saw what had happened he looked at the copper, then at the dying dog, and for a moment seemed stunned. He saw

the fellow put away his pistol and seemed to understand what had taken place. "My dog"—tears streaming down his face. He picked up the bleeding form and tried to revive it. Clutching it to his breast he said: "Oh, Mister, why did you kill my little dog, it's the best friend I have. It never would have harmed you if you had not bothered it." And as he placed it back on the side of his wagon he turned to the copper and said: "Some day you too will get shot down like that and may God forgive you for what you have done tonight."

It was the most pathetic speech I had ever heard. For a moment I stood in a daze. For a moment I, too, was a coward, for there in the dimly lighted street I had failed to recognize; I, too, was ashamed of my fellow man. I rushed into the building and called to Leon: "It's 'Pansy' and our desert friend." Leon stared at me and said: "What, he killed 'Pansy'?" We rushed back



"Some day you'll die like this dog!"

to the street only to see the ramshackle wagon disappearing down the hill in the drizzling rain. We both stood and looked. I don't know why we did not follow it. Leon has never been able to tell either. I guess we were both too ashamed; I guess we were both mental cowards. It was too big a task for our conscience to overcome, for how could we explain after what he and little "Pansy" had done for us? How could we ever explain his reception when he had called there at the station to find us?

We have talked of this many times since, particularly on one rainy, drizzling night not so very long ago when a bandit's bullet had stilled the beating heart of this self-same officer who had killed "Pansy." As I said before, I won't mention this officer's name as it would do no good, but Leon and I both wondered—was his death the result of a curse cast upon him by our desert friend and owner of that little woolly dog, "Pansy"? I will not try to answer; I will leave it to you.



## THE JET EARRINGS

THIS is a story of a wealthy woman, a pair of earrings and an indignant friend. It has to do with a certain December afternoon, when I was called into conference by Manager Barry of the Ville de Paris, an exclusive store in Los Angeles, and informed that he was having trouble with a mysterious thief who was using the firm's charge accounts to obtain untold quantities of things.

"Her system is simplicity itself," said the manager. "But the old problem is involved, *cherez la femme!*"

He had piqued my curiosity. A hunt for a woman always gives a detective a thrill. For one thing, a woman is usually a good bluffer. She plays the game out to the limit. That makes the affair interesting. Then, too, she is a magnificent liar, and once she is in your net, she will stand up and look you in the eye and brazen it out. It is almost as good a game as poker, with a clever woman for an opponent.

"You mean you know it is a woman?" I asked.

He smiled.

"Well, reasonably," he said. "We are judging by what she gets."

### PHANTOM SHOPLIFTER

Thereupon he unfolded the story of the "phantom shoplifter" who had cost his concern a matter of nearly a \$1,000. This promised to be a real case. As he explained, her system was the essence of simplicity.

The woman, whoever she was, would enter a depart-

ment store, select certain expensive goods and ask to have them charged. She would then give the name of some customer who had a charge account at the store. The charge would be referred to the credit man. He would glance at the name—usually that of some wealthy woman—and “O. K.” the charge. The article would be delivered to the woman waiting below and she would leave. The firm would not discover what had happened until it presented a bill at the end of the month, when the person to whom it was charged would come in and protest the charge.

“We have had every store detective in the place at work on the case, Nick,” said the manager, “and yet she always beats us. You see, we do a large volume of charge business, and many of our wealthy customers shop through maids, relatives and the like. We can’t know every one of them personally, and it makes it hard. This woman might be posing as a maid or something of the kind. Get me?”

I did get him better than he knew. I had had a case of that kind just a few months before. It might have been the same person, for the system was apparently the same. After weeks of work, I had been able to get exactly nowhere. I felt no growing burst of enthusiasm over another case of similar nature, and I said so. The manager shrugged his shoulders.

“We have no other court of last resort but you, Nick,” he said.

### FLATTERY WORKS

Of course, even a detective is susceptible to that kind of a statement. So we announced bravely, editorially speaking, that we would sail right in and solve the mystery and save the department store thousands of



dollars, just as detectives did in the movies. The manager laughed.

"If you don't do something," he said, "we are going out of business pretty soon. The way this woman is getting us we won't have enough stock on the shelves to pull through the Christmas season."

We parted after that. I had nothing—absolutely nothing—on which to work. Neither did he, and we both knew it. Somewhere in a city of 250,000 persons was a woman, and I was expected to find that woman with nothing on which to go—not even a description. Some prospect—one of the "simple" things frequently passed over to a detective to be solved.

But as I have always maintained, everything comes to him who waits—especially the detective who had patience enough to sit down and wait for it. And so, one day, the unexpected happened. We got a letter.

It was from a woman—a wealthy resident of the



"You say you have not purchased a necklace here?"



Westlake district, who was one of the firm's regular customers. I quote it from memory:

"If you call at my home I shall be very glad to return to you the pearl necklace which you dropped on the car yesterday afternoon."

The letter was signed by a Mrs. J. D. Vance, or so we shall call her. The customer, upon receiving the letter from Mrs. Vance instead of going to the Vance home, came to us and informed the store manager that she had purchased no necklace. The manager sent for me and I was introduced to the customer.

"You say you have not purchased a necklace here?" I asked.

"No," she replied. "Further, I was not on any car yesterday. I always travel in my own machine."

#### BOTH HAVE SAME THOUGHT

She handed over the letter and left. We sat stunned—the manager and I—staring at each other. The same thought struck us both. Mrs. Vance!

Half an hour later I was at the home of Mrs. J. D. Vance. When I introduced myself she went at once and, procuring the necklace, laid it in my hands, together with a charge tag bearing the name of the customer. I began to see light.

"This lady," I said, indicating the customer's name, "declares she did not purchase a necklace at the store and was not on the car yesterday."

Mrs. Vance's face was a study.

"But——"

"The woman you saw," I explained, "was some other woman impersonating the customer. We have been looking for her for some time. If you could give us a description of her——?"

Mrs. Vance puckered up her eyes and thought.

"Why," she said after a moment, with true feminine perspicacity for details, "she was quite an ordinary woman, although very stylishly gowned. I didn't notice anything particular about her save that she had on a fur coat and a brown hat, trimmed with fur of the same color, and carried a hand carved alligator handbag with a silver monogram, and patent leather pumps with black silk stockings, with a strap over the instep, and walked with a slight limp, and was very much made up, and was about 40 years old, with brown hair and dark eyes, and wore South Sea Island jet earrings."

I sat back limp. She hadn't noticed anything particular about her! My word! I wondered what she would have seen had she taken a good look at her. After a bit I came back to earth.

"Th-thank you," I murmured. "I guess that will help."

With almost a Bertillon photograph of the woman sought, I returned to the Ville de Paris and called on Manager Barry.

"Slip this description around among your clerks right away and see if any of them recalls a woman of this description," I said.

### SIX REMEMBER HER

He touched a buzzer and a stenographer came in. He dictated a copy of what I had written on the back of an envelope, as I talked with Mrs. Vance. Then we awaited results.

To our surprise, not less than six clerks reported that a woman of that type had made various purchases at the store over a matter of several months. They did not identify her with any special thing on account of the fact that a great number of customers pass through their hands daily. But one and all they recalled the jet

earrings. This was encouraging, but it did not get us anywhere except that it put all the clerks on the lookout for the woman. If she struck again, we would have her.

In the meantime, just on a chance, I went out to the house of the customer and asked her if she knew anyone that wore earrings of the type described. Her eyes opened.

"Why, yes, I do," she said. I felt my heart jump.

"Who?" I asked.

She looked at me for a long time. Then she shook her head.

"It can't be," she said. "The only woman I know is a good friend—prominent in society, a bridge player, and the wife of one of the leading attorneys of the city. I would as soon suspect a member of my own family."

Of course that made no impression on me—the latter part. In the business of crime detection one learns to suspect the most impeccable persons without reservation or hesitation. So I asked for this woman's name. My informant gave it reluctantly.

"Mrs. John Waterbury," she said. This was not the exact name, but it is near enough for the purposes of this story.

### TICKLISH SITUATION

I whistled. I knew her husband. He was in truth one of the legal factors in the city and a man who would not stop at anything to protect his wife in an emergency. I saw right away that we would have to go slowly. I thanked my informant and returned to the store, where we had a conference that lasted far into the day.

"The situation is this," I explained to the manager. "Either you have got to go through with this thing and protect your store, or else you will have to drop it now."



No halfway measures can be used with a woman of this nature, if she proves to be the woman we are after."

The manager agreed.

"But for heaven's sake, Nick," he said, "don't stir up a hornet's nest. Don't make a move without the absolute evidence."

I promised that I would be diplomatic in the matter. I realized full well the dangerous ground on which we were treading and I had no intention of making a mistake. So I set out on the trail of Mrs. Waterbury to collect my evidence.

She lived, I determined, in an expensive apartment fronting on Westlake park. The landlord occupied an apartment at the rear. On the pretext of renting an apartment, I engaged him in conversation. To my joy I saw a fraternal emblem on his buttonhole—the same that I myself wore. After that it was easy. I revealed my identity and explained my errand. He pondered.

"Mrs. Waterbury is not at home, just at present," he said. "She has gone to dinner at the home of a Mrs. Parker on Wilshire boulevard. I might let you in—I'll tell you what I'll do. We'll go up together. We can look around. If she comes in you'll be a curtain man that is measuring the apartment windows with me. How's that?"

I said that would suit me to a dot. Together we went up to the apartment, where the landlord opened the door with a key and admitted me. I have hardly ever seen a more luxurious setting for an apartment home. Oriental tapestries were everywhere. There were battered brass lamps, huge mahogany chairs and a wealth of bric-a-brac and what Ring Lardner calls "jazz statuary."

## A QUEEN'S WARDROBE

When we came to the closets I fairly gasped. That woman had clothes that would have turned the Queen of Sheba green with envy. I saw right there that I was going to be swamped. So I went at the thing in another way; I started to search her waste basket. Here I got results.

In the bottom of the basket I found a couple of department store charge tags with names, not those of Mrs. Waterbury. The landlord watched me curiously as I dug them out and compared them.

"What do they give you?" he asked me at length.

"Just about everything I want," I replied.

"Huh," commented my new found ally. "Want any more of 'em?" I turned in surprise.

"Any more? Why, yes, of course. Do you know where there are any?"

By way of an answer, he led me to a waste paper chute at the rear of the apartment, on the ground floor. There I found half a dozen more papers—department store tags all in the names of women I learned afterwards to be customers of the store.

There was nothing more to be done there. I was elated over my discovery and returned to the department store and laid the situation before the manager. He studied over it for a moment, and then took matters by the horns, so to speak.

"Nick," he said, "let's go down and get a warrant for her this afternoon—right away—now. She's been doing this about long enough."

Of course this was directly in line with my own ideas, and I did not discourage him.

"All right," I said, "we'll get the warrant and then we'll go right down to that dinner and gather in our

lady. I've got enough evidence right here now. And I've seen the inside of her apartment. I'll wager \$500 more than two-thirds of it is stolen."

### WARRANT OBTAINED

That settled him. One sometimes has to prime an employer as well as a "lizzie," especially when he is reticent about prosecuting a woman. So we hunted out a police judge and a clerk, according to the usual formalities. Fifteen minutes later, with a city detective in the machine with us we proceeded to the home of Mrs. Parker in the Wilshire district, where Mrs. Waterbury was said to be at lunch.

Mrs. Parker herself answered the door. Detective Hanson and myself waited at the door while she called Mrs. Waterbury. The latter came out presently, an exquisitely gowned, refined appearing woman of about thirty-five years of age. The color slowly ebbed from



"We have a warrant for you, Mrs. Waterbury!"



her features as she saw us standing there together. It was apparent to me that she sensed our errand.

"You wish to see me?" she asked pleasantly.

"We have a warrant for you," I said as quietly as I could.

For a brief second she closed her eyes and I thought she was going to faint. Then she opened them again.

"I—I was expecting this," she said.

She stood for a moment looking down at her hands, her fingers interlaced. When she raised her head, her eyes were filled with tears.

"Will you let me go back—please don't tell them!"

She spoke incoherently, with a quick gesture toward the dining room, from which we could hear laughter in women's tones and the mellow sound of dishes.

#### GLAD OF ARREST

"I will make some excuse to them—say my husband has sent for me, or something of that kind—and come back to you," she said. "I will then go with you—"

"Keep within sight of us, then, Mrs. Waterbury," I said. "We can't take any chances with you—"

"Oh, I shall, I shall. You need not fear, I shall not try to get away. I am glad it has come. The suspense has been terrible."

We stood there while she went back to the door and made a quiet little self-possessed speech. I marveled at her control as she faked up the excuse that her husband needed her signatures to some papers, a business deal, and she would be right back. It gave me some index to the cleverness with which she had conducted her operations. She was one of the most convincing persons I have ever come in contact with.

A maid brought wraps, and the three of us proceeded at once to police headquarters. From there I telephoned

to the department store, and the manager came down. Mrs. Waterbury laid her cards on the table. She admitted more than a dozen thefts of high grade stuff, secured on charge accounts. She said she used her social acquaintances to foster her plans. Whenever she learned of a friend with a charge account she profited by it.

We read the warrant to her there and she was booked and taken in charge by the jail matron. She asked permission to telephone her husband. He was not in his office and she left word for him to call at the jail. And then, for the first time in her carefully nurtured, daintily guarded life, she went to a cell and remained there.

### IRRESISTIBLE MANIA

Her only explanation—the only one, at any rate, that she gave us—for her wholesale looting of the department store, when she herself was a more or less wealthy woman and possessed of every comfort, was an irresistible mania for possession which exceeded her income.

"I lose a great deal playing bridge," she said. "Then I see pretty things and want them, and—well, under those circumstances, there is nothing left but to steal them, is there?"

The manager walked back to my office with me. We sat talking for some time about the case. The manager was still nervous about the whole affair; I laughed at him.

"You heard her admit the thefts?" I asked him.

"Yes—but suppose she backs up on that? Suppose—"

"The police have already been out and searched her house and brought in the stolen stuff, haven't they?"

"Yes, but—"

"There isn't any 'but.' The woman is guilty. I don't care whether she backs up or not. You can identify the goods that we found in her home. They were stolen, weren't they? Well—what's the matter with you?"

The manager went out shaking his head. He had an ingrained fear of picking the wrong person. In this case, however, I knew there was no mistake.

Ten minutes after the manager departed, my telephone rang. I took down the receiver to find the most indignant man in the world, at that moment, busily engaged in "panning" me from the other end.

"You are a fine stiff!" was his greeting.

"Hello—whom is this?"

"Harry—"

### CLOSE FRIEND CALLS

Harry was one of my best friends—an attorney, and as I well knew a close intimate of Waterbury. They had been together in several cases, and I saw how the land lay.

"Yes, Harry. What's the row?"

"Well, you poor fish, you have got your foot into a nice mess," he comforted. "Locking up Mrs. Waterbury. Her husband just called me up and told me about it. Say, Nick, for the love of Mike, how did you come to pull a bloomer like that?"

"That's no bloomer, Harry," I flung back. "We have the distinguished goods on the lady; furthermore, the lady is in jail and has confessed."

That stumped him for a moment. But he clung to his first statement.

"Well, you may have scared her into a statement," he said. "That's the way with you fellows. You pick out somebody, bluff them into an incriminating remark, claim you have a confession and go into court with it. It's the bunk—"

"Listen here, Harry," I cut in. I was hot under the collar by that time and I wasn't any too cordial over the telephone. "I know what I am doing. This woman



is a department store thief. We searched her apartment and found enough stolen loot to choke any attorney that ever tried to talk through his hat. She is going to be prosecuted for it and don't you forget it. And she is going to be prosecuted, notwithstanding the efforts of any chicken-hearted legal light to cajole a detective out of what he knows to be a fact."

### BOTH GOT ANGRY

I slammed up the telephone after that. I think Harry did, too. We were both mad. He sure thought I had "framed" a case and I thought he was trying to "pull me off." And we both were ready to forget a long time friendship to resort to blows. We have laughed about it since, but at the time we were as pleasant to each other as a couple of sick wild cats.

Mrs. Waterbury, however, to make a long story short, was guilty. Scores of women came to her rescue, only to learn that their confidence had been misplaced. She not only confessed to thefts in the store in question, but in other Los Angeles houses. Her confession cleared up many mysterious affairs that had been under inquiry for some time. But evidence of a serious illness which she had recently undergone, militated in her favor. With the evidence all in, she was permitted to reimburse the firms affected in the amounts they had lost. The affair ended here. Mrs. Waterbury was permitted to go free after restitution had been made in full.

The real "knockout" in the case came a week later, when the door opened to admit Harry—to my office. He was grinning broadly.

"Hello, Nick," he said. "Can I come in?"

"Leave your artillery with the stenographer," I replied a bit tartly, for his remarks still rankled.

"Don't be sore, Nick," he said. "I came up to apologize. I was wrong."

We shook hands after that. Finally Harry leaned across the table.

"I want to explain something, Nick," he said. "You know I got pretty well worked up over Mrs. Waterbury's arrest—"

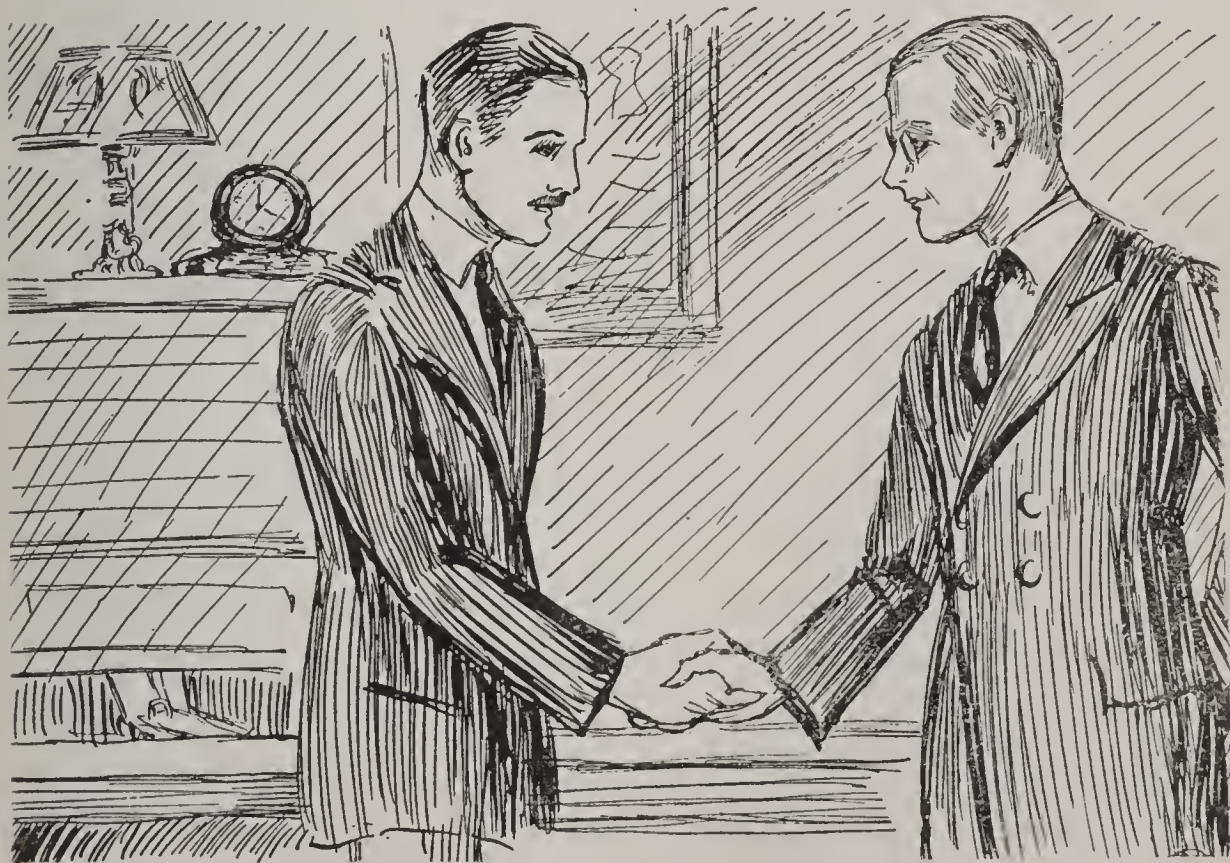
"I'll say you did," I replied.

### INVITED TO DINNERS

"Well," he laughed, "you see the wife and I had been rather intimate up there at the Waterbury home. We used to go there once in a while to dinner—a charming woman, and a wonderful hostess—"

"I understand," I said.

"No you don't yet," he said. I waited.



"That's why I'm here to apologize, Nick!"

"The night before her arrest," he went on, "we were there to dinner. She served four of the finest little club steaks that I ever ate in my life. The wife and I talked about them all the way home."

"Well?"

"Well, today I got my bill from the butcher. There, for the first time, I discovered that I had been paying for those four little steaks—"

"You?"

"Yes, Mrs. Waterbury had had them charged to me on my account, and everything else we had for supper at her house is also charged to me. So, Nick, it's coming to you. Let's be friends again. That's why I'm here, Nick, apologizing."



## QUEEN OF THE SAFE CRACKERS

**I**T is hard to know where to begin in speaking of "Nimble Annie." Her career was so varied, and her activities so wide that no ordinary set of criminal memoirs could contain them all. Perhaps the closing chapter of her life is the most interesting, because it reveals better than anything the queer psychology of the woman whose record for "working banks" has never been equaled in this country.

I had heard much of "Nimble Annie," as has every police officer and detective in the United States, although not under that name. She has gone straight now, and in justice to her good intentions her real police cognomen must be submerged under the sometimes nickname of her intimates. But, in the days of which I speak, she was a byword in underground circles, where the aristocracy of caste is as strong as on the upper boulevards.

My acquaintance with Annie began when I was called into consultation one afternoon by a manager of a prominent department store in the south in regard to a very peculiar happening. Los Angeles stores keep a close check on their property, and store detectives are everywhere to protect the merchandise from the light fingered operations of tourist crooks that invariably pass through that city when they reach the coast.

The manager of the store took me into his private office.

"I don't know what to do, Harris," he said. "It's all very mysterious. She seems to be one of our regular customers."



"I don't know what to do, Harris! It's all very mysterious!"

"Why not begin at the beginning?" I suggested. "What happened?"

"We've been robbed," he said, turning in his chair. "Cleaned as nice as anything you ever saw in your life."

"You mean your safe has been looted?" I asked in some surprise, for the office seemed orderly enough.

"I only wish it had been," said the manager. "It is worse than that. We have lost a fur hat!"

His announcement was at such variance with the extreme lugubriousness of his expression that I burst out laughing. The manager stared at me helplessly.

"Laugh while you can," he said testily. "If you had my job. . ."

"But a hat!" I exclaimed. "Since when has it been worse to steal a hat than rifle a safe?"

"This hat is one of a three-piece set. There is a hat,



a muff and a stole. The three are worth \$1,800. The hat alone is worth \$500."

That was different. I began to understand something of his situation. He saw that I had been impressed at last and rapidly sketched what had happened, pausing to assure me that with the hat gone, the set was valueless—a cool steal of approximately \$1,500 figured in wholesale quotations.

"The only person who could possibly have taken it," he said, "is a fine appearing old, white haired woman—a regular dowager—who frequently shops here. She always pays cash, and one day she seemed interested in the set. A short time after she left the hat disappeared."

"One of your regular customers?" I asked.

#### NEVER ASKED CREDIT

"Well," said the manager, "in the sense of a cash customer, yes. She never has asked for a charge account. She has plenty of money and buys expensive stuff. This missing hat is just the sort of thing she would go in for. I hate to suspect a customer, yet, by the simple process of elimination, it narrows down to her." He considered. "Of course, we will have to be mighty careful in this thing. She might be above reproach."

It was a hard nut to crack. In regular shoplifting jobs there is usually some indication of the kind of person that has "worked" the place by the articles that are taken. In this case, the theft of an expensive fur hat did not have the earmarks of a professional. It savored more of the work of some woman, hard up for the moment, through bridge excesses or a limited allowance, who had taken a fancy to the hat and made away with it. Such thefts are not uncommon.

"The only thing I can do is to place a watch on the



store and when she comes again, trail her and learn her antecedents," I said. "This may give us a clue."

The manager shook his head dubiously.

"Well, whatever you do," he said, "go slowly. She may turn out to be an important person and we may have to square the thing up some other way."

I realized his predicament. When a wealthy or prominent woman is detected stealing, the case requires a finesse and tact that would tax the ingenuity of a diplomatic corps. I detailed a woman connected with my bureau to loiter about the store and watch for her. One of the clerks who had seen the woman was to point her out. In the meantime I took a detailed description of the woman and turned it over to a clerk to file with the other card index records.

There was a little girl in my office named Mary—a bright Irish lass with a quick brain. She was filing the card in one of the cases when she stopped suddenly and studied it. Then she came over to my desk.

"Mr. Harris," she said, "I think that woman goes home with me on the same street car. There is a woman answering that description who gets off at my corner."

This seemed too good to be true, but in the detective business we learn very soon that the most improbable things are the ones that most often point a trail. That night when Mary went to her home, two of my operatives accompanied her. She was to point out the woman to them if she proved to be on the car as had been her custom on several previous nights.

We did not catch her that night. But the very next night when Mary got off the car at Jefferson and Vermont streets, this woman got off with her. She was exquisitely gowned in the latest mode—tall, graceful, white haired, looking every inch a society woman of wealth and refinement. Mary trailed her on the opposite side of the

street a block away until she saw her turn into a house some two blocks from the car intersection.

The next day two detectives, James Bean of the Los Angeles police office department, and L. M. Armstrong, of my office, went out to the house. The door Mary had indicated led to an upper flat. We were so secure of our quarry at this time that few precautions were taken. In other words, we did not believe it possible that a woman of the appearance of this one could be a store-lifter. Consequently the operatives figured only on asking a few general questions, making a guarded inquiry and getting away again. They wanted primarily to size her up.

### HURRIED FLIGHT

They rang the doorbell. There was no response, although there were sounds from within which indicated that there was someone there. Finally Bean went around to the back door. He found it wide open, and peering inside discovered the remnants of a late breakfast on the table and places set for two. The coffee-pot was smoking and the toast was still warm. Evidently whoever was in the flat fled the instant the bell rang.

Cursing themselves for not taking better care, they started back for the office, first taking the precaution to circle through the neighborhood on the chance that they would see the woman with the white hair—a marked figure—somewhere about. What was their surprise to see, not two blocks from the house, a woman answering the description and with her a small, dark man apparently an Italian.

“You circle the block and come in behind them,” said Bean, who was an old police detective and a wizard at his business. “I will walk in the same direction with them on the opposite side of the street. When I see

you closing in from behind I'll turn and walk toward them. That will get them between us."

Armstrong followed instructions. He ran quickly around the block so as to come in behind the couple, who were walking along the street as though out for a stroll. Bean walked ahead of them, paying no attention to their movements until he saw Armstrong turn the corner and hurry down the block. By this time the couple were in the middle of the second block.

Bean crossed the street and turned up the sidewalk directly toward the couple. They came toward him without slacking their pace. The woman gave Bean a quick, scrutinizing glance and said something to her companion. Bean, alert to every move, kept decreasing the distance between them, with Armstrong close behind and coming still closer.

Midway of the block was an ancient yellow house of the gingerbread type now out of style. Behind the house was a corral with a board fence around it. The corral fence ran parallel to the sidewalk and for a distance of perhaps fifty feet. The little group came together directly beside this fence—the woman with the white hair, the dark man, Bean and Armstrong. Bean stopped them.

"I want to talk to you just a minute," he said.

The woman gave him a quick, searching glance from a pair of keen, piercing eyes. Then she smiled and came closer. Bean thought she wanted to hear him more clearly. He was about to raise his voice and repeat his remark when the woman suddenly threw her arms around Detective Bean, pinning his own arms to his side.

"Run, Tony, run!" she screamed.

The little dark man without a moment's hesitation, turned, vaulted the high board fence with astonishing agility, and was away through the corral yard. As Bean





The woman suddenly threw her arms around Detective Bean!

struggled to free himself he heard Armstrong's revolver crack and the "smack" of the bullet in the side of the shed that stood in the corner of the corral yard. The next instant Armstrong was over the fence in pursuit of the dark man.

Bean freed himself and stepped back.

"Well," he said, "that was pretty slick, but we've got you, anyhow."

The woman smiled pleasantly, panting a bit from her exertions to hold the operative, and flicked a jabot into place.

"You think so?" she said. "Well, we'll see."

Armstrong came back after a bit and together they took the white-haired woman to police headquarters. She tried to bluff it out all the way to the station, threat-

ening legal proceedings declaring that "somebody" would suffer for the indignity of her arrest, and demanding to know the charge. When informed that she was wanted for looting a department store of an expensive fur hat, she blazed at them.

"I never was in that store in my life," she declared. "I'll make you cheap detectives smart for this, believe me."

After she was safely tucked away in a cell, Bean and Armstrong reported to me. Frankly, I was rather nervous about the whole matter. We really didn't have anything on her and if, as she insisted, she was the widow of a wealthy Paso Robles rancher, she was in a position to sue a whole lot of us for false imprisonment. It is this angle of many cases that often causes them to drag so interminably—the necessity of having every step sure and provable.

With a couple of police detectives we went out to the woman's apartment and searched it from top to bottom. There was nothing there, as richly furnished as it was, that indicated anything of the shoplifter. Matters began to look dubious and even the police officers shook their heads and said they thought we had gone off "half cocked" on the case. More or less disheartened, we returned to the police station. There was still one more card to play—my trump—and I played it. We went to her cell.

### MY LAST CARD

"I am going to take you up and have you fingerprinted," I said.

The woman's eyes flashed.

"You have no right to do that," she flared at me. "I have done nothing. I am not a criminal. I will make it hot for you. You will have to kill me to get those prints."

I sat down on a chair in her cell and talked to her. I explained that we were merely trying to do our duty and that if she was really innocent, and not "wanted" in any other jurisdiction, she had nothing to fear from the fingerprints. I argued that her refusal meant but one thing—that she was afraid. That got her.

"Very well," she snapped. "I'll go. But heaven help you all when this mummery is over."

We took her into the print bureau. The operator brought out his ink roller and the record cards. The prisoner was nice and amiable about it then, apparently giving in with a cheerful philosophy to what she recognized as inevitable. But—

Every time we got her fingers inked and started to take the prints, she would move her hand just the slightest bit and blur the impression. We tried it four times, and each time she ruined the card. Finally the operator laid down his roller.

"Give me your handcuffs, Nick," he said.

Protesting, arguing and jerking, availed the woman nothing. The Bertillon man snapped the cuffs on her wrists. Then, twisting one of them until the chain was close up against the wrist, he tried it again.

"You'll get your hand twisted off this time if you try any more monkey business," he said.

She gave in then. We wouldn't have twisted the chain, for even then we weren't sure, but a whole lot of this sort of thing is like any other kind of successful enterprise—it is bluff. And the other people in the world didn't know exactly how far we would go to make the bluff stick.

#### WHAT PRINTS SHOWED

Ten minutes later we had a perfect impression of her fingers. Half an hour later we found these same impressions in our card index records—the Bertillon and



fingerprint charts culled from all over the United States. Then, and then only, did we understand why she had battled so hard to keep us from finding that card in the police files. For the woman who sat before us, the woman with the exquisite clothes, the keen eyes, the white hair and the manners of a dowager, was no other than "Nimble Annie," the most notorious female safecracker in the United States.

There was a whole lot that that fingerprint record told us about this woman. The wife of one of the best safecrackers of a quarter of a century before, she had led a hectic existence. All that her husband had known he had taught her. All that his gang knew became her post-graduate degree. Her husband had been killed at Quincy, Ill., in a battle between his gang and a posse of citizens and police while cracking a bank, and she had taken up his work where he had dropped it, to win for herself a sensational reputation which he never could have enjoyed in his best days.

"Nimble Annie" was known to every police department in the United States. She was wanted for a score of jobs, all over the country. Many of them had outlawed under different state statutes or the communities could not afford to extradite her. Many crimes of robbery and burglary were laid at her door on suspicion. She had served time for one affair, and yet her grip on her followers was unbroken. In her line she stood alone and supreme—the "queen of the safecrackers."

I sat down and talked to Annie after I learned who she was. She readily admitted her identity then. The conversation I had with her, sitting in the matron's room in the jail at Los Angeles, will long remain in my memory. Annie was widely read and well educated, and had been everywhere. Since she was sixteen she had lived by her wits, and they were sharper than the wits of six ordinary

women. A brilliant conversationalist, an entertaining listener and a keen analyst of human nature, it was easy to understand how she had eluded trap after trap set for her by the best sleuths in the business.

### PSYCHOLOGY

Listening to her as she talked freely of her record and accomplishments in the world of crime, it occurred to me that I had a colossal task ahead of me to secure a confession from her in the matter of the fur hat. For, remember, we had absolutely nothing on her save the suspicion that one of the salesgirls in the department store had voiced after Annie's appearance there and the disappearance of the missing article. There seemed only one way out—psychology. Would it work?

"Annie," I said, "I am disappointed in you."

She studied me carefully.

"How so, Nick?" she asked.

"Why," I said, "here you are—the best safegetter in the business, the queen of the profession, a woman to whom the ordinary safe is as an open book. You have elevated safebreaking into an art. You are the head of your business. You have come down to swiping a fur hat out of a department store. Why, Annie, you are getting old. You are losing your stride. You are becoming a 'has been'. . . ."

I talked to her along that line for some time. She sat there silently, listening to me. After a bit her eyes filled up and she dropped her head. She knew what I was saying was true—she was getting old.

"Some day you are going to slip, Annie," I said. "You are not as fast in the head as you used to be. This job doesn't amount to much. It is not in your class, and you know it. Think of what your former pals are going to say when they read in the paper that 'Nimble Annie,'

the smoothest thing in the safecracking line, has stooped to 'snitching' stuff out of a department store."

Annie began to cry. I knew I had accomplished a whole lot to bring tears, for she was not the crying type. But I had tapped the mainspring of her long buried femininity—the weak spot of the great majority of women. She was getting old and she had laid herself open to ridicule. And this, to her, as to most women, was a tragedy.

"Nick," she said after a bit, "I am going to say something. You know you are the first detective that has ever talked to me like that—shown me any kindness in my life, even from the time I was a kid. I think I have wanted—just that—more than anything in the world."

She sat twisting a handkerchief between her hands, a pitiful, crumpled figure of a woman—a woman old enough to be my mother, and with an intrinsic fineness in her make-up that somehow would, under different environment, perhaps, have rendered her fit to be the mother of anyone. My sympathy had broken her down. She was going to talk. I hitched forward eagerly in my chair, fully expecting a confession.

"Go ahead, Annie," I said. "You know I want to be your friend. This is a hard game, and you know every angle of it as well as I do. If there is anything you want to say. . . ."

Annie leaned forward while I held my breath. It was a tense moment. Psychology was about to be justified and cleverness was due to come into its own.

"Nick," she said, "do you know where I can go for my rheumatism?"

It developed afterward that rheumatism was correctly the biggest thing in Annie's life. During the later years of her life she had felt it creeping upon her, stiffening her fingers—the long, supple, self-trained fingers that



were her biggest asset. She feared it with her whole soul. In the moment of her biggest emotional stress that idea came uppermost as the most important: Where to go for rheumatism?

Well, I was game. I had decided to go right through with Annie until I won. So I took her question seriously, as staggeringly different from what I expected as the North from the South Pole.

"I have a friend at Gillman's San Jacinto Hot Springs, Annie," I said. "I'll write him a note. You can go there. I'm sure it will do your rheumatism good."

That was as far as our interview went. She thanked me for my offer, and after several more futile attempts to elicit information about the fur hat, I wrote the note and left.

### SHE PLEADS GUILTY

"Nimble Annie" surprised us all when she came into court charged with the theft of the hat. As a matter of fact, we could not have proved the case on her because we had been unable to find the hat. What the lawyers call the "*corpus delicti*," or the essential element of the case, was absent. Annie, however, pleaded guilty. The court, out of respect for her advanced age—for Annie was pretty well along in years then—contented itself with a fine, and she was released.

I found out afterwards that Annie's plea had been based upon my talk with her. She figured that if she fought the case it might react on me, for Annie was wise enough to know that in the absence of the hat we could not convict her. But I had done her a favor. I had told her where to go for her rheumatism. In the canons of her craft, that represented a favor. She returned the favor, according to her standards, by pleading guilty,

and I got the credit for a conviction. Such is life in the police court.

A few weeks after that my stenographer rushed into my private office with her eyes wide with excitement, and said that something mysterious had occurred. She said a messenger boy had called with a package, asked if Mr. Harris was there, and upon receiving an affirmative answer, had thrust the package into her hands and fled. She sat holding the package, listening to his receding footsteps running down the hallway, before it dawned on her that I might want to know who he was.

"What kind of a package?" I asked.

The girl measured off about a foot in space.

"About that size!" she said.

I followed her into the reception room. There on the table, sure enough, was a package about a foot square, wrapped in ordinary wrapping paper and tied tightly with a string. It bore no name or inscription or mark by which identification could be established. It looked sinister and mysterious. Frankly, it made me nervous.

A detective, at best, owns to an extensive repertoire of enemies. His profession engenders that attitude very frequently by persons with whom he does not come directly in contact—relatives or friends perhaps of those whom he arrests or traps in the course of his business. In a way, a detective lives pretty much on a hair trigger—or over the crater of an invisible volcano. In its final analysis he never knows what minute someone will undertake to square accounts.

### A MYSTERY GIFT

So with this mysterious package sitting silently and alone on my table top. What did it contain? Carl Warr had broken loose just a short time before—the madman who walked in the Los Angeles police station with a

glass bomb which revealed its deadly mechanism, and held a metropolitan department in terror for hours before it could be taken away from him. The first thought that entered my head when I saw that package was that some one had planned a similar gift for me, in an effort to shift my activities into eternity.

An old police trick occurred to me—one that usually renders a bomb useless—namely, to soak it in water. So I sent for the janitor and asked him for a tub—one big enough to contain the box. He went away with his eyes popping out of his head, to return presently with the quieting information that he couldn't find one big enough for the purpose. I have always been somewhat of a fatalist in my philosophy of life. Perhaps it is because of what I have been through in various cases. Most detectives are the same. They take their lives in their hands on so many occasions that after awhile, no matter what their original beliefs and convictions have been, they grow callous to danger and gamble on life as a tangible asset. Wherefore, with no means of rendering the "bomb" harmless, I took a pocket knife and, while the stenographer crouched back against the wall with a white face, I cut the string and opened the package.

Of course you have guessed the answer. It was the hat—the missing fur hat. Annie had returned it to me out of gratitude, I suppose. I returned it to the department store without telling how I had obtained it, merely saying that it was a "trick of the profession." Of course, I received a lot of unmerited credit for this, the manager putting it down to my superlative cleverness and detective acumen, and all that sort of thing.

Days afterward, Annie, herself, called on me, looking the picture of health and contentment. We had a very interesting talk. I tried to thank her for returning the



hat, but she evaded the subject. Finally she switched the conversation around to more personal matters.

"Nick," she said, "I had a wonderful time at San Jacinto Springs. They did me a lot of good. You know—"

She looked out of the window and her face softened.

"You know, Nick, I did a lot of thinking up there at the Springs—about what you said to me—about getting old. I came to the conclusion that you were right. I am getting old. I can't get into a safe the way I used to. You've got to keep in practice to do that, and I'm not as agile as I used to be. I've decided to quit."

"Nimble Annie" quit! That was a new one. I expressed my incredulity. She nodded.

"I am through," she said. "You know, there comes a time in the life of all of us—professionals, I mean—when we've got to face the fact that we've done our share." She smiled with the record of scores of successful safe crackings perhaps flitting through her memory. "Now I think I'll leave it to the younger generation. I'm out of jail. I've got plenty of money to live on. I might slip the next time and go up for twenty years, and that would kill me. I'm too old for that now. So I've made up my mind."

### A MINE OF INFORMATION

We talked for a long time after that—mostly of the technicalities of safe robbing. Annie was a mine of information. As I have said, she was the queen of them all. Men came from all over the country to get her ideas on the subject. She was the supreme court of last resort when a difficult job loomed. Much of this she told me now as a past master of any craft likes to reminisce when the active days are over and the creeping shadows of the closing years begin to steal upon him.

"When I was at my best," she said, "I could open any safe that was made—any ordinary office safe—in less than five minutes."

This astonished me, even though I knew Annie for the best in her business. I asked her how that was possible.

"Well," she said, "twenty years ago most of the bank safes were not secure. They were crude in construction and safe cracking had not been developed to the acetylene torch age, when an ordinary crome steel vault is butter in the hands of the expert. I have cleaned many a safe without the bank people knowing that it had even been opened. I had to tell them that I had robbed the safe to keep them from arresting some innocent cashier for embezzlement, so sure were they that their safe had not been opened."

This opened up a new field of speculation. I found myself wondering how often the same thing is still being done today and recalled the protestations of innocence of cashiers I had seen convicted, whose words carried conviction and yet against whom there seemed a clear case. Had they been the victims of a clever safe cracker not gifted with Annie's conscience, who had let them serve time rather than tell the truth?

"Most of those old time safes were like your safe here," said Annie, indicating what I had always considered as a good safe, standing against my office wall.

"What do you mean?" I asked indignantly. "You infer that this is a poor safe. I paid . . ."

Annie threw back her head and laughed.

"Sure you did," she said. "You paid a good price for it and you thought you had an impregnable vault. That safe of yours is 'duck soup,' as we say in the business. I could get into it in three minutes. It is so easy it is foolish."

My surprise must have showed in my face, for Annie

seemed to enjoy it hugely. I turned and looked at the safe. It was a standard type, heavy, massive, with several tumblers, and a jimmy-proof door. I could see nothing but explosive as a possible opener, but I was not willing to back my judgment against Annie's uncanny skill.

"I would like to see you do it—just as a matter of education," I challenged.

### A DEMONSTRATION

Annie's eyes gleamed. Thorough crackswoman that she was, she could not resist the gauntlet.

"Get me a needle," she said quietly, pulling off her gloves.

"A needle?" That was a new one. Perhaps "crackers' " slang for a "jimmy," I thought.

"Yes—your stenographer has one, perhaps."

"A common house needle?" I asked.

"Yes."

I walked into the next office, rather dazed, and asked Miss Ruth Dean, my secretary, if she had such a thing. She did. I returned and handed it to Annie.

She took it in her long, supple fingers—fingers that marked her for a woman of high temperament with musical inclinations and marvelous artistic possibilities.

Then she turned to me.

"Got a watch?"

I had.

"Time me!"

She knelt before the safe while I stood with the watch in my hand, my eye on the minute parker. Annie took the stenographer's needle and clenched it tightly between her front teeth holding it by the "eye." The point she pressed tightly against the face of the door, her forehead





In this manner she slowly twirled the combination!

close to the safe. In this manner she began to slowly twirl the combination.

In exactly three minutes she threw her head back, glanced up at me with a smile, and grasping the handle of the safe door, pulled it open.

"What would you like out of your safe?" she asked.

I dropped on my chair. Annie stood with her hands on her hips, laughing at me. It had been, as she expressed it, so simple it was foolish. And she had done it right before my face without a fumble.

Then she explained. It seemed that she depended entirely upon the sensitized nerves of her teeth for the trick. Holding the needle against the door between her teeth, she was able to tell by that means the exact instant that the major tumbler slid into place.

"It registered on the top of my head like the blow of a hammer," she said. "It took me a long time to learn that . . ."

No wonder they had never caught "Nimble Annie." No wonder the best "strong boxes" in the country, guaranteed burglar proof, had been rifled by this woman without a trace of the means by which it had been accomplished. Knowing the general construction of safes, she knew just what to expect—what to wait for. When the last tumbler slid into its socket, she had reached the end of her effort. It was truly a work of art.

Annie talked for some time after that, giving me many interesting sidelights of her experience in this particular. Finally she got down to business.

"Nick," she said, "I'll tell you what I came for. I want your protection."

Annie had knocked me off my feet several times in the last hour. But this was the final blow.

"Protection—you?" I asked.

Annie chuckled.

"Yes—funny, isn't it? I've trained with the worst yeggs in the country and handled 'em under every kind of a condition. And here I'm asking for protection. Go on and laugh—it's on me this time." Then she explained.

### HER PROTECTOR

"It's against department stores," she said. "I want to be able to go shopping without getting pinched. I'm going straight now—I've retired. I'm a woman of wealth. But that goes only where I'm not known. Get me? Where the department store dicks know me, they watch me. But that isn't enough. If anything is missing in that store while I'm there, they are going to hang it on me—just on account of my reputation."

There was truth in that, as I well knew. Annie would be the first to fall under suspicion.

"Just what do you want me to do?" I asked, slightly puzzled by her request.

"I want a detective to travel around with me and act as a bond for my good behavior," she said. "I don't want to be annoyed by constant arrest. I've earned a good rest and I want to have it out of jail. That's all."

And that was the closing chapter in the life of "Nimble Annie," the greatest safe cracker this country has ever seen. She is living in California today, well liked, apparently respectable, and a "widow of means." She has a magnificent home, moves in certain social circles, and travels in a limousine. But—

Whenever she steps into a department store or a bank to transact business, there is a detective ever at her elbow—at her own request—her visible, living guarantee that for all time she is through with the profession in which she attained such signal honors. And every department store "dick" in the country knows and understands her human semaphore of virtue—the tangible index of "Nimble Annie" reformed!



## THE TRUNK BANDIT

THERE are many who remember Chandeleau—the dreamer, the clever one, the master-mind. Chandeleau, himself, admitted that he was all of these. He planned to be a Napoleon of crime—a Fouche for astuteness, a Lecoq for execution. Carefully through the days he wrought the fabric of himself upon these patterns. When the time was ripe he cast the dice in one big throw. How, then, did he fare? A woman tripped his feet—a woman he never saw—and Chandeleau, the dreamer became Chandeleau the penitent!

The story: It begins with a letter—a plain white envelope containing a sheet of paper written in a slow, painful scrawl. It was the handwriting of some one well along in years—a woman. It came in the morning's mail of a certain August day to Wesley Barr, city editor of the Los Angeles Evening Herald. It was addressed to him, and he ran his pencil under the flap and withdrew it from its envelope.

"If you will go to a hotel in the fashionable Westlake district, you will find a man named Chandeleau. When you find him you will have the master-mind burglar. I am writing this to save some mother's innocent son."

These were the words that stared the city editor in the face, words that fairly vibrated with mystery and intrigue. The signature was as mysterious as the note. It read: "A Friend of Humanity." Such a note, sent to a newspaper, would have sent a ripple of expectation down the spine of even the most calloused reporter. There were possibilities there.

The newspaperman, however, was an old-timer at the game—an old police reporter. Instead of handing the letter over to a member of his staff to run down, he sent for me.

"Come over, Nick," he telephoned. "I've got a mystery for you."

Fifteen minutes later I was humped over his desk, examining the note, which bore all the marks of genuineness.

"I figure it this way," said the newspaperman. "There is a chance that this is a movie stunt of some kind gotten up by the film gang out in Hollywood. On the other hand, it may be the real goods. If the first, I don't want to be a goat for a press agent story, and if the second it's a police matter. In either case I want you in on it. If you unravel anything, remember—we get the scoop!"

### HE HAD A HUNCH

"All right," I said. "I have a hunch this is genuine."

Why I said that I do not know. Some sixth sense, so long heralded as an attribute of the detective and newspaper game seemed to impress us both. Perhaps things of that kind throw out their own vibrations that register on us—that, too, is a mystery. But often I have seen it work out that way—a "hunch" played for all it was worth and results.

With the letter safely tucked away in my files, I detailed a couple of men to comb the fashionable Westlake and Wilshire boulevard districts for traces of the man mentioned in the communication. It was a tiresome task—a detailed, minute, careful system of guarded inquiry. The Paris police excel the world in this sort of thing, and next in point of efficiency is the American detective. It is the most difficult of all routine police inquiry business.

Such tasks drag interminably, as a usual thing. But

in this instance luck was with us. At the fifth place—a high-class hotel, the operatives turned up Chandeleau—a name scrawled on a register, with an initial C. They found that Chandeleau was a man of peculiar habits. He came and went at odd hours. When he slept at home or where he spent his time no one of his fellow lodgers knew.

When this was reported to me I became interested. I detailed one of my best professional “shadows” to trail our man. The “shadow” developed some queer information. First off he discovered that Chandeleau was having a peculiar kind of a trunk made in a trunk factory on South Main street. The trunk was to have padded insides, with a false top and a small seat. It was so constructed that when it was locked on the outside, it could still be opened from the inside by means of springs.

“He says he is going to do a Houdini act on the stage,” the trunk man explained to my operatives. “I think he is a nut, myself . . . .”

When the operative reported these things to me, we put a closer watch on Chandeleau’s movements. A man with a trick trunk may be a genuine dramatic sensation. But a man with a trick trunk who has been branded a master-mind burglar in an anonymous note that has the earmarks of genuineness, was quite another matter. Wherefore we settled down to the task of keeping Chandeleau “covered” day and night.

### HAD ANOTHER ABODE

It was only a matter of hours before we discovered that he had other lodgings than those in the fashionable Westlake district. His second abode was in a cheap lodging house on South Flower street. The third day of the “watch,” with my man at his heels, he climbed the stairs to this room, inserted a key in the door and went inside. There he remained for several hours, apparently



pouring over blueprints or drawings. During that interval the operative learned from the landlord that Chandeleau had rented the room there recently but had never occupied the bed. The mystery, as fiction writers have it, was deepening.

Recapitulating what we had learned in the brief time we had been at work on the case, it seemed that Chandeleau was probably conducting some kind of a rendezvous where crimes were planned. We figured that probably this Flower street lodging house was his working headquarters from which he could operate without attracting the suspicion that would develop in the more exclusive Westlake apartment house.

With this in mind, we rented the room adjoining that occupied by Chandeleau in the lodging house, and installed one of the operatives there with a dictograph. Right here let it be said that the dictograph is all that is claimed for it and an invaluable asset in crime detection, notwithstanding the prejudice that still exists in many courts against it. In the hands of competent operatives, it is just as sure and accurate as the lens of a camera.

The dictograph we used was installed behind a picture in Chandeleau's room—a highly colored lithograph of a woodland scene. The wires were led to a pair of sensitive receivers in the operative's room. From that moment onward, every move that Chandeleau made, every word that he said, almost every breath that he drew, was heard by the operative in the next room as clearly and distinctly as though he stood by Chandeleau's elbow.

From a purely detective point of view we had our man "sewed up in a sack." When he moved afield, a "shadow" was ever at his heels. When he wrought in the seclusion of his room, a tiny ear listened to his every movement from behind the woodland scene. As the operative facetiously expressed it, we could "hear him

change his mind." With the stage all set, we awaited developments.

The day following the installation of the dictograph, Chandeleau scraped up an acquaintance with a young fellow whom he met in Westlake park. The chap was a boy about nineteen years of age, tall, sallow, bearing the earmarks of recent illness, and dressed in a shabby, faded khaki uniform. What conversation took place between them I do not know. The operative had to keep a distance to escape observation, but he could see that Chandeleau was talking earnestly and the boy was listening intently.

After a bit they walked toward Chandeleau's room on Flower street together. Chandeleau led the way upstairs, and unlocking the door, bade the boy make himself comfortable. A bottle of whiskey produced from a closed shelf and a package of cigarettes completed the hospitality. Chandeleau's affiliation with the boy became apparent to the listening operative in the next room.

### A "\$20,000 SCHEME"

"I'll put you next to a scheme to make \$20,000," said Chandeleau. "That is, provided you are game to take a few chances."

There was silence after that and the clink of glasses.

"All right," said the boy. "I need the coin. Shoot."

And Chandeleau shot. In a few concise sentences, and without the usual reservation of statement that characterizes a crook he laid bare the most remarkable plan of looting a safe deposit vault of its contents that has ever come under my personal attention. The plan, as he explained it, was briefly this:

Chandeleau had been with the intelligence service on the Belgian border, he said, while serving with the Canadian army. There he had worked out a plan of cross-

ing the border, locked in a packing case. During the night he would escape from the case, which was a trick affair, collect such information as he desired, re-enter the case and then, with the assistance of a confederate on the German side of the lines, return in the packing case to the Canadian troops.

It was this scheme which Chandealeau now proposed using in the robbery of a bank. It was a plan that called for the aid of a confederate. Sitting in the back room of that unpretentious lodging house, he outlined in exact detail how the thing could be done. The trunk was being made. The bank had been picked. All he needed was an assistant who would obey orders. The rest would be easy, so he figured.

"I advertised for an assistant," he said. "I put in an ad for a man to rough it who would take a chance. No one has answered. If you are game. . . ."

He left the sentence unfinished. The boy thought it over. Chandealeau had emphasized the perfection of the scheme, the ease with which it could be worked, the impossibility of detection. The stakes he held out were alluring—" \$30,000, or maybe more," he had said. The lad had a chin that slanted easily into his collar. There was no virile stamina mirrored in his face. At the conclusion, he consented, asking what his part would be.

"It's this," said Chandealeau. "We'll have two trunks put in the bank vault. We will put one in first. Later the second one will go in. I will be in the second one. I will have with me everything that I will need for the job. There will be a watch with an illuminated dial, gloves to keep from leaving finger prints, woolen socks to muffle the sound of my feet, all the tools I need, electric flashlights, and enough food and water to last a couple of days. I have worked five years on this trunk. . . ."



The operator heard the boy give an exclamation of admiration. Chandeleau continued:

"After the trunk is put in the vault," he said, "I'll wait until it is night. Then I'll slip out through a secret door, loot the suitcases and packages in the vault. I'll cut the ends out of the parcels and after I have cleaned them I will put them back just as they were. The robbery will not be noticed for several days, perhaps weeks. Then I will load both trunks with the stuff and the next day you can come and get the trunk I am in out of storage. Later we will get the second—"

"How much do you. . . ?" asked the boy.

"I figure we can clean up \$30,000—maybe \$50,000—that way."

There was a long silence. After a bit the boy spoke, and his voice was a bit unsteady.

"All right," he said. "I'm in on it. What's my share?"

#### FIFTY-FIFTY SPLIT

"Fifty-fifty," said Chandeleau.

There was a clink of glasses and the bargain was sealed.

There was more conversation after that, but mostly of a desultory character. They left the room shortly after that, after arranging to meet the next day, when, Chandeleau said, he thought the trunk would be ready for the "trick" which was to mark a new epoch in criminal achievement.

With the dictograph operative's report in my pocket I called on two of the directors of the bank mentioned by Chandeleau and laid the case before them. At first they were frankly amazed and incredulous. Then as I explained the workings of the contemplated plan as outlined by this master criminal, their eyes opened in aston-

ishment. They were inclined to doubt the amount of loot which Chandeau expected to obtain, but on sober reflection came to the conclusion that a robbery of the vault would probably run into even higher figures.

The vice-president was the most perturbed. He foresaw the effect on the bank's clients when it became known that the bank's sacred vaults had been robbed in such a simple manner.

"It would cause endless confusion," he said.

At that time we were facing one dilemma. We had nothing actually on Chandeau for which we could arrest him. The law requires, in a case of this kind, some overt act. If we stepped in and took him into custody we had no crime with which we could charge him and be reasonably sure of a conviction. The most we could accomplish would be to scare him into some other jurisdiction where he would undoubtedly carry out his intentions with greater care.

### LET HIM GO AHEAD

Under the law, which required the establishment of an overt act, we were kept from halting him in his plans. It seemed better to let him go ahead until we were sure of his intentions, and I expressed this belief. The bank directors finally consented and I was authorized to proceed according to my best judgment and to keep them informed of the progress of the investigation.

The city editor of the Los Angeles paper was constantly on my neck during those days, anxious for a "scoop." Every day he called me on the telephone and asked me if the story was "ripe," and each day in fear of his restlessness, I told him to wait.

"I'll nail your skin on a fence, Nick," he said to me finally, "if you let that leak into a river journal."

I promised faithfully to let him have the "edge" on

the yarn when it broke, inasmuch as he had tipped me off in the first place, and told him how matters stood. He was enthusiastic.

"Either you are the biggest liar this side of the Rio Grande," he said, "or this is a whale of a yarn."

As it turned out subsequently, it was a "whale of a yarn."

It was the second afternoon after that—about 3:45 o'clock, to be exact—that the dictograph operator called me on the telephone we had had installed in his room in the Flower street lodging house, and repeated a conversation he had just heard between Chandealeu and the boy in which Chandealeu said that he had found that he could not get the money together to have two trunks made and he thought that they had better make an experimental test with one trunk on some other place. He said he had decided to try out the plan on the storage room of the Hollywood Fireproof Storage Company.

With this information at hand I redoubled my precautions in the trailing of Chandealeu. It developed that he had selected that place because he happened to know that many of the movie people at Hollywood had placed their valuables in this company's vault owing to an epidemic of movie home burglaries. Burglars had "touched off" Tom Mix, Charlie Murray and Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle's homes, and most of the other stars had taken their valuables to the Hollywood vaults for safety. His clean up here would have amounted to \$100,000, it was afterwards estimated.

The boy went to the Hollywood warehouse the next morning, pursuant to Chandealeu's instructions, and deposited a small package about the size of a cigar box. He told the deposit clerk that he would send a trunk the next day in which he had a lot of valuable ore samples. and asked him to take good care of it. The clerk prom-



ised that he would. After the boy left, I got in touch with the vice-president and general manager of the storage company and asked him to come to my office.

### MANAGER INFORMED

I shall never forget the astonished look on his face when I explained what was in course of preparation with his concern as the intended victim. He was more than amazed. He assured me instantly of every cooperation. Of course we were considerably in the dark at that time as to Chandeau's exact intentions. We did not know, for one thing, just when he had intended to send the trunk to the warehouse. The hours that followed were tense ones, fraught with a strain such as I have hardly ever felt on any other case.

Fate, however, was good to us. The following afternoon the operative who was on watch at the Flower street lodging house, telephoned to me that the trunk had arrived at Chandeau's room and Chandeau, himself, from the sounds heard over the dictophone, was in the act of getting into the trunk for the trip to the warehouse. The time for action had arrived at last, and we jumped to the task with our nerves tingling with excitement.

Detective Sergeant Herman Cline and his partner, Detective E. R. Cato, of the police department, whom I had apprised before of the situation, rushed to my office in response to a telephone message, in the police machine. I also notified the city editor, and he detailed his "star" police reporter, and a camera man to accompany him. We made quite a party as we climbed into the police car and hurried to the Flower street lodging house. William G. Hanson, my general manager, accompanied me.

The driver of the machine had his instructions. He cruised to the corner of the block in which the lodging house was located and crossed the street slowly. Peering

from the rear seats we could see an expressman in the act of loading a trunk aboard. A tall thin youth in faded khaki was aiding him. A half a block down the street I saw one of my operatives busily engaged in adjusting the bridle of a fruit peddler's horse, his eye on the express wagon.

The youth got up on the seat and rode with the driver. The vehicle started off in the direction of the Hollywood Fireproof Storage Company's warehouse, with the police machine trailing judiciously in the rear. Ordinarily we would have gone directly to the warehouse and awaited the arrival of the express wagon, thereby obviating the possibility of the boy or the expressman finding out that the trunk was being watched. But we did not trust Chandeau. We were not quite sure that the warehouse was his objective.

We might have eliminated our slow, guarded cruise to that point, however, for the vehicle, without any attempt at concealment, proceeded directly to the warehouse. We watched the unloading of the trunk from a distance, closing in only when the boy, the driver and the trunk disappeared indoors. Then we alighted from the machine and walked up to the door of the storage company's plant.

The two detectives stood up against the building, engaged in what appeared to be casual conversation. The newspaperman and his cameraman crossed the street, passed the storage warehouse, again crossed the street and came toward us. I met them directly in front of the door. We shook hands and stood talking as though the meeting was accidental. While we were so engaged, the boy and the driver emerged from the place.

#### SURROUNDED

The trunk had been delivered and placed in the stor-

age vault. The boy was putting the receipt into his pocket as the newspaperman and I stepped up to him. Cline and Hanson stepped in behind. In less than a second, so carefully had we rehearsed the thing, the boy and the driver were completely surrounded. Something of this thought must have registered on the lad's brain, for I saw the color leave his face.

"What's your name?" asked Cline, without any preliminary.

The boy hesitated. Then something he saw in our faces telegraphed to him that he had better answer the question.

"Earl Wilson," he said, shortly.

"What's in the trunk?" asked Cline.

"What's that to you?" asked the boy with sudden heat.

Cline pulled back his coat and disclosed the police badge.

"What's in the trunk?" he repeated.

The boy's gaze wavered.

"Clothes . . ." he evaded.

Cline laid his hand on his arm kindly.

"Look here, Wilson," he said, "this isn't going to do you any good. You told the warehouse people you had ore samples in that trunk, didn't you?"

The boy licked his lips and his eyes ran around the party. Every one was watching him curiously, alert for a possible movement to draw a weapon. Cato, who stood directly behind him, had his hands swinging free, ready to catch the other's wrist if need be. The driver's face was a study in slow amazement.

"Yes, I guess I did," said the boy.

We waited silently—the hardest form of the third degree known for the criminal. The lad shifted and the



perspiration stood on his forehead in beads. Finally I broke the silence.

"How long are you going to leave Charlie in that trunk?" I asked quietly.

The boy swung startled, frightened eyes on me. Then, with a sudden convulsive movement that indicated complete surrender, he buried his face in his hands and began to sob.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "I knew something would happen! I knew something would happen . . ."

### FELT SORRY FOR HIM

We all felt sincerely sorry for him at that moment. He was a sick boy—ill, out of work, "down and out" in the sense that many of us have been at one time or another. Chandeleau was a smooth talker, and he had held out big stakes—easy stakes—at a time when the lad's resisting power was at its lowest ebb. It was too bad, but that is the cold-blooded part of the law, and of life, for that matter. It was, after all, his problem, and we had to go through with it, even if we did feel sorry for him.

"Come on, lad," said Cline. "Let's have it all."

And he told us, standing there on the sidewalk in front of the Hollywood warehouse—the whole plan, as we already knew it through the merciless medium of the little dictophone behind that cheap, highly colored woodland scene in Chandeleau's room—told us in a voice that broke, with a face that suddenly aged with the weight of what he now realized was his overwhelming part in the whole affair.

"I guess it wasn't cut out for me to be a successful burglar," he said. "It all looked so wonderful at the start . . ."

After we had finished, Cline stood looking at him for a moment.

"All right," he said. "That will be all now. Now we'll go and break the news to Charlie."

Taking the lad with us, we entered the storage plant, where we found the manager waiting for us in a fever of anxiety.

"The trunk's here!" he announced excitedly.

"You bet it is," I replied. "So is the man who brought it and the man who came with it."

With the manager in the lead, we proceeded to the storage vault. At a signal from Cline we tiptoed in quietly. The trunk was sitting on end in the room, with other stuff piled all around it. In appearance it looked like any ordinary trunk, save that it seemed newer than the others. Cline walked over to it while the rest of us grouped around it. The cameraman set up his tripod and focused his box.

There was something uncanny about the whole thing—this search for the body of a living man. Standing beside the trunk, it seemed hardly credible that a man could squeeze himself into such a small space. Even Cline, old-timer that he was in the police game, was impressed. He whispered to me:

"Nick," he said, "I've handled many a job in my time, but this is the most unbelievable thing I ever tackled."

With these words he stepped forward and rapped sharply on the trunk.

"Come on, Mr. Man," he called. "Open up."

There was only the echo of his voice in the closely packed room. We waited tensely for a sign from Chandeau. Would he answer the summons with a volley from a concealed weapon? Was he even now peering at us through some keyhole, over the sight of a revol-

ver? Or was he dead? The boy, Wilson, leaned forward, his face ghastly in the dim glow of the incandescent lights that swung from the ceiling. It was the latter thought that was affecting him.

"Come on, Charlie," I called. "The party's all over. Show us how you are going to pull the Houdini stuff."

Still there was no sound from within the trunk. We looked at each other and then at the boy. His eyes seemed ready to pop from his head. Finally Cline turned back to the trunk.

"Open up that trunk, Chandealeau," he commanded, "or we'll chop it to pieces!"

### TRUNK OPENS

With the words there came a movement, audible, from within. Something clicked. There was a slight grating, and then before our eyes a small door in the top of the trunk, now facing upright, swung back, and through it emerged the head and shoulders of Chandealeau, the trunk bandit.

What he might have said or done is speculative. What he had in his mind at that instant we shall never know. For at the moment his head emerged from the trunk, the cameraman, whom we had forgotten and who was watching the scene with cool, alert eyes, caught the picture he most wanted—that of Chandealeau emerging from the trunk. In that second he pulled the trigger of the flash gun.

"ZOOM!"

The gun roared in that narrow enclosure with a concussion like dynamite. For the barest fraction of a second the whole scene blazed with a weird blue light, and then went out. Chandealeau squeaked like a startled rat, and ducked back into the trunk. In his terror—his





"How did you know I was here?" was all he could say.

possible belief that we were shooting at him—he must have touched a concealed spring. The next moment there was a clicking sound, and the trunk fell all apart—collapsed like the One Horse Shay—leaving Chande-leau, the master burglar, huddled amid the wreckage.

Cline leaned forward and pulled him out—up to his feet, where for the first time we got a good look at him. He was in his undershirt, with his suspenders around his neck. From head to foot he was bathed in perspiration from the close confinement of his narrow quarters. His jaw sagged in abject terror and amazement, and he was shaking all over like a man with the ague. He looked more like a terrified animal at bay than any sight I have ever witnessed.



That is about all there is to the episode. Chandeleau was held to answer, together with Wilson. The day before they were to have been tried, in the superior court, the boy Wilson died from a hemorrhage of the brain, superinduced by his illness and the excitement under which he had been for the previous weeks. I think everyone was glad his part of the affair ended that way. He was the victim, as the weak elements of his life must always be the victims, of the stronger. Perhaps death worked out a better solution of his problem than the law.

And the letter? We never found out who wrote that. That was the one angle of the case never cleared up. I have often wondered . . .



## THE NATIONAL SWINDLE

P. T. BARNUM, showman, circus impresario and student of human character, once remarked that time was marked by the birth of "suckers." Only Barnum expressed it differently. What he meant was that "rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief," as well as carefully scheduled financier, all have a vulnerable spot—wine, women, wireless, rubber plantations and romance, all in turn. I expressed something of this to the stern visaged man across the table from me.

"Bosh," he snapped. "The day of that stuff is past. We are too well informed now. The gold brick man is starving to death."

It was a hot summer day—a time for confidences, cool drinks, white suits, a balcony overhanging the sea and mermaids splashing in the sapphire distances. Instead we sat in an office in a Los Angeles skyscraper and talked. The fault lay with Justin H. Richardson, banker, who had curtailed my golf by a hurried and unexpected visit.

I wondered. Justin H. Richardson did not come abroad without reason. What was in the wind?

"I asked if you thought a financier could be victimized by a government," he went on, "because it leads to something."

He fumbled in his pocket and brought out a sheaf of letters which he spread out on the table. I sat silent. Knowing Richardson intimately, I understood thoroughly that he wanted to do the talking and in his own way.

"Nick," he said after a bit, "we have been acquainted for a number of years and I have grown to trust you

—more than one man usually trusts another—especially a man in my position. I am going to entrust you with a secret that I would not want even my closest associate to know. Furthermore, I want it understood at the very beginning that I am not going into this matter for the reward I shall receive, but because I have been touched by the appeal of a helpless fragment of humanity in distress.”

He paused and the stern lines of his face relaxed for a moment and the softer side of the man which to the world was strange and alien, showed through the crust of business for an instant. My surprise must have shown in my face, for he smiled.

“Sounds like I am getting into my second childhood, doesn’t it?” he remarked.

“It sounds as though you had been misjudged,” I parried.

Justin Richardson sat back in his chair and stared at the papers on the table. Then, with a gesture of decision, he thrust them across the table to me.

“Read them first,” he said. “Afterward I’ll tell you what is on my mind.”

I picked up the papers and scanned them—a letter, a whole twelve pages of letters, written in a precise foreign hand, a newspaper clipping. \* \* \* I opened the letter. It was headed, “Madrid, Spain,” and a date not very remote. The words caught me, intrigued me by their simplicity:

“Madrid, 19th, 8-2.

“Dear Sir:—With great pleasure I have received your cablegram, for which I thank you, and I pass to explain you my circumstances as briefly as possible.

“Before all I must say to you, as you will hereinafter see, that the person aiding us in the matter is a gaoler of the prison who is a nice man at all whose confidence

I have obtained. Fearing that my first letter should not have reached you for any reason I took the precaution of not signing my name and I said you to cable to a brother-in-law of such a gaoler, but being now myself sure that you can receive any letter I can say you all trusting on your honesty. The matter is the following:

"I was trading as a banker at the Canary islands (Spanish Dominions), and after some unfortunate speculations which take too long to explain I was about to be arrested for fraudulent bankruptcy when I resolved to fly away for shelter to another country.

"In fact, I realized all my credits converting same into ready money for avoiding future suspects, obtaining in such a way (\$300,000) in 300 bank notes of \$1,000 each, which amount was placed by me in a double bottom trunk made for the purpose, and immediately after accompanied by my daughter, sixteen years old, I departed to France, with the contrivance, of residing there. I was obliged to take passage in the first steamer that was unluckily sailing for Spain. Safely landed at Barcelona, from whence the same day continued to travel to France in the first train, sending my trunk directly to a French railway station for recovering same after my establishment in France; unfortunately arrested by the Spanish police that was informed about my flight.

"I carried with me in the train two hand valises, one of which is constructed with a secret pocket perfectly dissembled, placing myself in such a pocket a check for pounds 3,600 (\$18,000), payable to the bearer on sight at London, and also I had the nice idea of placing in the same secret pocket of such valise, together with the check, the receipt delivered to me at Barcelona for my trunk sent to France.

"When my arrestation took place my hand valises were secured and arrested, being myself present, but the



secret pocket was not discovered, and afterward was sealed. As I said I had no other baggages, not finding on me the receipt for the aforesaid trunk, this trunk has continued safely to France, where it is at the warehouse of the railway station awaiting to be delivered to the bearer of the proper receipt. According to Spanish laws where natives of the Spanish colonies are arrested in Spain must be carried to the capital of the kingdom for judgment, and for such reason I have been carried to Madrid. My trial has just finished, having the Turi given me a soft verdict sentencing me to three years' imprisonment, to pay a fine of 13,000 pesetas and to pay also the cost of the trial. In the sentence also is stated that if within fifteen days from date of same is not able for me to pay the fine and costs of my said trial, according to Spanish law regulations, all my belongings must be sold by public auction, being amongst the objects contained in my hand valises some jewels that belong to my late wife and estimated with a value of 7,500 pesetas.

"It is therefore absolutely necessary for me that I may recover my valises before the term fixed, as otherwise the bidders by too frequent examination might by chance hit on the secret, and then the authorities would enter into possession of the receipt and the check being lost for me, if such should be the case.

"Under the circumstances, being myself at prison and without money, I beg of you to come here to leave free my baggages in order that you may hold the aforesaid receipt of my trunk and also the check, saving such a way my fortune and with a part of which my creditors and paying them something would not be very difficult for me obtain a commutation of my sentence. I beg you to do so chiefly in behalf of my poor daughter, who since my arrestation was placed into a state orphanage on the outskirts of Toledo. Doing so will be

saved and secured the future of my innocent and darling daughter.

"Your name has been known to me as follows: Same has been given to me by a gentleman subject of your country, who is arrested in this prison. I don't know his real name, being he registered under a false one because he does not wish that his family may never know his imprisonment. When you may be here easily you may have an occasion of seeing him at the same time that you may visit me. He has told me that you and him have had old acquaintances.

"Doubtless you will be surprised about the confidence I place on you, but if you take into consideration my actual position you will see that I must trust in someone and being myself satisfied with what I have heard about you, I risk everything and place myself in your hands. I have no relatives and I am not trusting any of my old friends at the Canary Islands because knowing my actual position I could expect nothing from them but treachery and deceit. I have no one in Madrid, having never been here before, and besides I would not trust a countryman, as he might denounce me to the authorities. I trust entirely in your honesty and in your absolute discretion, begging God to make you understand my critical position and that you can save me.

"I am happy to tell you, however, that I have obtained the confidence of a gaoler of the prison, who is precisely born at the Canary Islands, and thanks to him I am writing freely to you. Before writing to you I offered said gaoler \$5000 (without discovering to him my secret) if from the warehouse of the prison where my valises are kept he would get me some family papers required for me obtaining money, but he refused, saying that he would have to break the rules to do so, which would cause him to be perhaps, imprisoned and to

lose his situation. If he had accepted I would have sent my daughter with the receipt to recover the trunk reached to France and all would have been saved.

“Such a thing not being possible and not having myself the amount wanted for recovering the valises again approached the gaoler, who for not losing the \$5,000 offered has promised me the following, viz., that if some one of my friends come and pay the expenses he would agree to do as I asked him, but under the sole and absolute condition that said expenses should be paid as soon as he delivers the papers, because in such a way the seizure can be left free the same day and nobody would know anything about the breakage of the seals.

“Under such a condition I beg of you to come and help me. You will have to pay no money until the railway receipt for the trunk and also the check may be in your hands. When I may inform the gaoler that you are coming to pay the expenses for leaving free the seizure and to help me, he will go to the warehouse of the prison where my valises are kept and acting under my instructions he will find the secret pocket and will deliver you the papers under an envelope containing name. Please immediately open said envelope, noting numbers and particulars of both the railway receipts belonging to the trunk and of the check as I don't exactly remember said, and for your personal satisfaction you may wire the station master of the French railway station where my trunk is stored, asking him if there is deposited a trunk under the number and particulars of said receipt. At the same time please wire also the Bank of London asking whether check for 3600 pounds (under the number of the check) is payable to bearer at sight, begging both instances an immediate reply to your name at the hotel where you shall lodge. On receipt of the answers, that surely will reach you a few hours after-



wards and that indeed will satisfy you, the gaoler will definitely deliver to you the envelope and contents and you at your turn will deliver him the amount necessary for leaving free the seizure.

"You will then immediately depart with my daughter to recover the trunk and to cash the check, keeping yourself for you the third part, that is to say, dollars to 6000 together with your expenses, and afterward you will have the kindness of going with my daughter to a bank I shall appoint you, where you will turn in her name an iron box in order that she may place within same the remainder excepted the \$5000 for the gaoler that she must carry with her.

"However, I will explain all this later on your arrival here, as I shall be able to obtain an order from the judge to permit you to visit me in the visitors' gallery and in our interview you may satisfy yourself about everything. You will observe that I do not say in this letter the place where my trunk is deposited, but you will clearly understand the reason of doing so. Of course you will know everything when you shall be here.

"I send you enclosed a cutting of a newspaper of this city relative to my arrestation, together with an official copy of my sentence, both translated hereinafter into English, and also the official receipt of my valises kept under seizure. When coming, please bring with you these papers, being same required for taking out my baggage. In the sentence you will see that the expenses are 1897 pesetas, 40 centimes for the lawsuit and 13,000 pesetas for the fine, which altogether makes a total amount of 14,987 pesetas and 40 centimes (\$3,000 in U. S. money), being such the amount which must be paid for taking out my baggage; that is to say, recovering safely the railway receipt and the check.

"You will also note that the sentence being dated



## DEPOSITARIA JUDICIAL

Talón núm. ~~312~~ por valor de ~~14987-~~ pts. ~~40~~ cénts.

Por orden del Tribunal de la Sala 3<sup>a</sup>, con esta fecha se ha hecho firme el embargo preventivo de los bienes anotados al dorso pertenecientes al detenido

Roberto de Silva

cuyos bienes podrán ser retirados mediante el pago de Catorce mil novecientas ochenta y siete pesetas con cuarenta céntimos

Esta Depositaria ateniéndose á lo ordenado por el Tribunal, expide el presente resguardo á favor de Roberto de Silva

previniéndole que si para el día 24 de Noviembre de 1920 no ha satisfecho lo que acienda al Tribunal

esta Depositaria venderá en Pública Subasta todos los objetos que le han sido embargados.

Madrid 24 de Junio de 1920

El Depositario,

L. Oliva

on the 24th of June, 1920, the 150 days expire on the 24th November, 1920. I cannot tell you to write directly to me because I fear that your letter may be intercepted, being our secret discovered if such be the case. For such reason it will be best to cable according to the directions which I gave you. Now you know the extent of my misfortunes and tribulations and you may understand why I cannot trust myself to more than one person, as it would be dangerous for me. So please take everything into consideration, resolve quickly and energetically and get ready to come as soon as possible. Trusting so I can assure you that my gratefulness will recompense your services to which will be added the everlasting grati-

tude of my dear daughter and greatly contributing to her happiness."

This was the letter—a curious document if ever there was one yet teeming with dramatic interest. I turned back to the opening sentence.

"To what cablegram does he refer?" I asked.

Justin Richardson shook his head.

"That is the puzzling part of the affair," he said. "I have sent him no cablegram—never heard of the man in fact, until this came. But that means nothing. Either he has mistaken me for someone else or the telegraph company has mixed up addresses. In any event, he has aroused my interest. Read the rest of that stuff."

While the banker lighted a fresh cigar and slid down in his chair, I unfolded a clipping in Spanish to which a translation had been attached. The translation was in the same fine script and was headed: "The Arrestation of a Banker!" The context followed:

"Some time ago the police was informed that banker of the Canary Islands named Roberto de Silva flighted away, leaving debts amounting to about 2,000,000 pesetas. The necessary orders were given to watch over the frontier, and yesterday at the express train of the morning was Roberto de Silva recognized and arrested, accompanied by a daughter of him, pretty girl fifteen years old, just at the moment of entering into France.

"Both the banker and his daughter were carried to the police offices and afterward placed in the presence of the local judge, who ordered with regard to the daughter the immediate liberty and with regard to the banker to be put under imprisonment and the separation was an act of great emotion between them.

"The banker carried with him two hand valises that were seized and searched, not finding in same any amount,



although it was known that when he eloped from the Canary Islands he carried an important amount.

"Being the Canary Islands a Spanish domain and ordering laws regulations that native of same when arrested in Spain ought to be judged by the law courts of the capital of the kingdom. The lawsuit against Roberto de Silva will take place at Madrid."

"Not much of an English student," I remarked.

Richardson chuckled.

"But he gets his meaning over, just the same," he replied. "Go on—there's more of it."

Attached to the newspaper clipping was a translation of the sentence imposed upon the unfortunate "Roberto de Silva" by the Madrid court. This read:

"The tribunal composed of, etc., etc. Applying to the articles 411, 412 and 507 of the penal code, etc., etc. We must condemn and we order Roberto de Silva, ex-banker, 48 year old widower, born at Santa brue de benerife (Canary Islands) to the penalty of three years imprisonment and to pay a fine of 13,000 pesetas owing to a bankruptcy made by him at Buenerife on the date of 15th March, 1920, amounting to about 2,000,000 of pesetas.

"We must condemn him also to pay the court and the costs of the proceedings amounting to 1987 pesetas and 40 centimes, which together with the 13,000 pesetas of the fine make a total amount of 14,987 pesetas 40 centimes (fourteen thousand and nine hundred and eighty-seven pesetas with forty centimes). And if in the installment of 150 days counting from the date of this sentence he has not had the satisfaction of the aforesaid amount all the objects belonging to him will be sold at public auction.

"By this our sentence we pronounce and we order the



## TRIBUNAL DE 1ª INSTANCIA DE ESTA CIUDAD



El tribunal compuesto de los Sres. Magistrados expresados al margen, ha dictado la siguiente

### Sentencia:

Aplicando los artículos del Código Penal núms. 411-412-507

SEÑORES

D. Juan Ruiz  
Luis Val  
Ignacio Ruiz

Debemos condenar y condenamos a Roberto de Silva  
ex-banquero viudo de 48 años de edad y  
natural de Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Islas  
Canarias) a la pena de 3 años de prisión y  
a la multa de 15.000 Pesetas por el delito de  
quiebra fraudulenta valorada en 2.000.000  
de Pesetas y perpetrada en Tenerife (Canarias)  
el día 15 de Marzo de 1920.

Lo condenamos asimismo al pago de las costas y gastos de su proceso, que ascenden a la suma de 1.984 Pesetas con 40 Centimos,  
que unidas a las 13.000 Pesetas de multa  
que le han sido impuestas hacen un total  
de 14.984 Pesetas con 40 Centimos. Catorce  
mil novecientas ochenta y cuatro Pesetas con  
Cuarenta Centimos. Ptas 14.984,40 Centimos

Y si en el plazo de Cinco Cincuenta días contados desde el pronunciamiento de esta Sentencia, no ha satisfecho dicha cantidad, todos los objetos de su propiedad serán vendidos en licitación pública.

Por esta nuestra Sentencia así lo pronunciamos y mandamos su ejecución habiendo sido publicada y sellada por orden del Excmo. Sr. Presidente de esta Audiencia.

Madrid. 24 de Junio de 1920

V.º B.º

El Presidente,

*[Firma]*

Es copia,

El Secretario,

*[Firma]*

execution of same. Published and sealed under the orders of His Excellency the President of the Tribunal.

“Madrid, 24th June, 1920.”

The last and what seemed to me to be the most important portion of all the documents, was the final one which contained the minute instructions by which the release of the long suffering De Silva was to be effected, stipulating the handling of the money, the hotel, route and such matters. It was plain from this document that the rescue had been well planned and carefully thought out. The paper, a translation like the others, said:

“Please observe these instructions minutely so as not to meet with any mishap. Your itinerary must be the following:

“In New York you will take a steamer to France or England, and when reaching Europe, Paris, from Paris directly to Madrid.

“At Paris you can take the train which leaves from Quai d’Orsay station at 8:27 night, taking your ticket direct to Madrid.

“The same day leaving New York please cable the gaoler, whose address you will see hereunder, and when reaching Paris I beg of you to send another telegram to the same address saying the hour of your departure for Madrid in order that I may calculate when you can arrive.

“At your arrival in Madrid at the outlet of the station you will take a cab of the many are there showing the cabman the small enclosed paper where is appointed the name of the hotel. This hotel is placed in the center of the town where you shall be nicely lodged. The gaoler will go to meet you asking for your name giving you a letter of mine and resting to your disposal to aid you in everything.



"I beg you again to recommend the utmost reserve in regard to our affair because the least word you might drop might compromising. The matter must be a secret between you and me.

"Please remark the following important advice about the manner of bringing your money. As our matter must be finished at once because as I have said you it is necessary at all to do the payment for leaving free the seizure the same day of your arrival, that is to say, the same day that the gaoler will do the operation you know, it shall be the utmost convenient for you to bring your money in U. S. bank notes and not in a check nor another banking paper, because in Spain when cashing a foreign check or the like is required as a guarantee the signature of a local trading firm. Obviously that neither I in my actual situation nor the gaoler owing to the delicateness of the matter can procure you and the best for avoiding all kind of troubles and losses of time will be to bring the amount in American bank notes.

"However, if for precaution should you prefer crossing the sea carrying with you your money in a check, you can do so, bringing a check cashable at London or Paris before coming to Spain for the above reasons you must cash it.

"American, English or French bank notes are accepted and exchanged in Spain without any trouble at all. I beg you not to forget the sending of both telegrams and follow carefully my instructions for avoiding loss of time, all must be done here as I have explained you being the matter finished the same day of your arrival.

"Awaiting anxiously the moment of shaking your hand,

"I am your dear friend,

"ROBERTO DE SILVA."

"Address where you must send the two telegrams.

"Mariana Soto, Aquas K. Segundo, Madrid. I think you will have well understood how easy is the matter for you. You come and pay departing immediately with my daughter to cash the check and to retire the trunk of the French railway station."

When I had finished reading the last document I tilted back in my chair and stared across the table at the man who sat across from me. He squinted at me through the haze of cigar smoke.

"Well," he said, "what do you think of it all?"

"A most remarkable thing," I replied. It was. In all my years in the handling of various kinds of criminal cases I had run against some queer affairs, both public and private. But this had a romantic interest attached to it that far outstripped anything with which I had come in contact. It was like a chapter out of Robert Louis Stevenson, or a scrap of Captain Kidd. I could understand thoroughly the manner in which Richardson, hard, practical, unemotional man though he was, had been intrigued by the luring adventure of it.

"What do you want me to do with this?" I asked, somewhat puzzled to determine why he had brought the matter to me.

Richardson paused a moment before replying. Then he leaned forward and tapped the table with an impressive finger.

"I want you to make a careful investigation of this matter," he said. "I want you to verify the dates of trans-Atlantic sailings and the data regarding hotel accommodations. I want to know exactly how much time this trip will take. In the meantime, I am going to set my affairs in order \* \* \* "

"And—"

"Well, Nick, I am going to take a fling at it, that's all. I am frank to confess that the thing has got me. If, for instance, this letter had fallen into the hands of some unscrupulous person, if the Apaches of Paris, for instance, should find out the helplessness of this girl of sixteen \* \* \* \* \*"

This was indeed a new angle on Justin H., one that some of his associates would have given many dollars to see. Yet here he sat in my office, owning to a heart like any other human being. It was one of the sidelights on human nature that the detective and the newspaper man often glean, sidelights denied to the rest of less fortunate humanity. Richardson went on:

"I understand thoroughly the settled banking conditions of these South American countries and can appreciate why De Silva had to make his hasty flight. Here in God's country we know only too well with what bankers have to contend when a new president goes into office overnight, or between suns. The bankers are the first victims always. So I am going to do what I can. But for the grace of circumstances, De Silva might have been myself. \* \* \*"

He arose abruptly and reached for his hat.

"I will await some word from you," he said. "In the meantime, I shall go ahead with my arrangements. Get your information as quickly as you can."

He laid a one-hundred dollar banknote on the table.

"For expenses," he remarked, adding that I had but to call on him for any additional amount I needed to secure the necessary data.

Long after Justin H. Richardson left me, I sat in the office and studied the letter and the attached documents over and over. A detective, delving into the vicissitudes of human existence has some strange commissions. This



was the first time, however, that I had been confronted with the task of checking up trans-Atlantic steamers and hotel accommodations in France, England and Spain as a part of one and the same commission.

As I pondered over the matter, certain words connected with the whole episode as set forth, began to drum in my head—words that at first had no meaning, and yet as time went on grew into a queer significance that I could only but half appreciate.

“Banker, South America, prison, Barcelona, Spain!”

Six words—six familiar words. Familiar? Where had I heard them before linked together? Was it in a headline? Was it a faint shadowy memory of my newspaper days—some forgotten scrap of something that wanted to come back \* \* \* that knocked at the door of my inner consciousness, seeking translation?

The thing worried me. I wanted to get away from it—from the case itself. I have found through long experience that the knottiest problems untie when one gets a distance away from them. One gains perspective, clarity of vision. But the pounding emphasis of those six words refused to let me escape. It was like a haunting voice calling to me out of the past—trying to tell me something. But what?

On an impulse I went to the theatre, resolved to violently tear myself away from the thing and start on the morrow free from impressions. Seeking escape from the heat I came across a cool arcade, and followed the crowd, not caring to wait what the picture might be. As it happened it was one well known in the picture world—“The Modern Musketeers.” To me the thing was a title and nothing more.

I sank into my seat and gave myself over to the enjoyment of Douglas Fairbanks in the lead. The reel unrolled. It went from action to action, as does all of

Fairbank's stuff. Suddenly there flashed up a Kansas cyclone where an expectant mother was reading about the "Three Musketeers." The cyclone sent my mind jumping back some twenty years, when I was a police reporter on one of the big metropolitan dailies. There had been a tremendous windstorm and a frame house crumpled to the ground, burying several families in the debris. I arrived on the scene with the police in time to take part in the rescue work. Among the victims we found a wealthy woman and three children.

Her husband, she said, had gone to Spain to help a man out of prison.

It was at this juncture that the picture before me faded out suddenly as memories smashed home with terrific sharpness. Spain! To help a man out of prison! Other angles of the picture came back. A hunt through the ruins \* \* \* the finding of a letter in a dresser drawer, which the woman had read to me \* \* \* the husband's address at Barcelona, Spain.

Unconscious of the stares of indignant persons who resented my departure, I jumped suddenly to my feet and went scrambling for the aisle, and so out into the night. \* \* \*

The next morning Justin H. Richardson came to my office in response to my summons. He was manifestly excited, for I had told him over the telephone that facts I had discovered would make it impossible for him to take the trip—that he would refuse to take the trip, in fact. He rushed in without knocking.

"What's happened?" he asked.

For answer I handed over a brief typewritten report which I had compiled the night before after leaving the movie theater. He gave me a curious look and then

settled down to the reading. Ten minutes later he laid the report down on my desk.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he said. In that phrase he expressed his full appreciation of one of the cleverest swindling games ever invented to mulct an unsuspecting American citizen.

The "stunt," as I explained it in my report, was to select some big business man—one of unimpeachable standing in a community and make him the victim. This was done, first, because he possessed money to make the trip; second, because he could not afford to "squeal" when he found he had been victimized, and third, because he is made to believe that he has violated the law.

When the victim arrived in Spain with the much coveted grip and the claim check for \$300,000 to bribe the jailer, he was immediately arrested by bogus officers and threatened with a jail sentence for attempting to bribe state officials. He naturally paid any price to get out of the mess, figuring on his standing and the trouble that would follow an expose of his action. He was then placed aboard a home-bound train or boat to hurry away as far from Barcelona and sunny Spain as his income would take him.

"I have had a talk with Postoffice Inspector Cookson," I said, as Richardson stared at me with his mouth open, the report trailing idly in his fingers. "He tells me that your letter is about the thirtieth that was received in 30 days—an average of one a day. The government is trying to trace the author. At that, it is powerless to do anything, as no offense has been committed in this country, the money always being passed in Spain.

Opening a wallet, I passed back the \$100 which Justin H. Richardson had given me as a retaining fee.

"I won't need this now," I grinned at him.

Justin H. removed his cigar and hurled it far out



of the window. Then he took another \$100 bill from his capacious pocket and laid it beside the first.

"Nick," he said solemnly, "there is one more favor I want to ask of you. This money is for services rendered, but there is a string to it."

"Shoot," I said, "let's hear the worst."

"Well," said Richardson, and there was a gleam of sardonic amusement in his eye. "I want you to spend this finding Doug Fairbanks for me. When you meet him just thank him for me and tell him his picture saved Justin H. Richardson a helluvalot of money. And then Nick . . . ask him to come over to my place, no matter what time of night or day it is, and kick me—hard! I'd like to have Doug do that because I have an idea he would do it . . . well! Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

## THE MYSTERY WOMAN

THERE are mysteries in every police department—strange, garish, bizarre happenings that remain forever unsolved and baffle the ingenuity of even the cleverest of detectives. Such is the DuPêche case, the mystery of Mary Rogers (from which Edgar Allan Poe wrote his famous “Marie Roget” series), the carpenter Schumann in Berlin and Vienna’s famous “Organ Grinder” murder. Of such is the mystery of the nude woman of Los Angeles, which is still noted in police records as an unfinished puzzle.

The first chapter of this strange affair, upon which a romancer could weave a whole book of thrills, began in my office in Los Angeles on a late afternoon, when spring was in the air and the jangle of the telephone registered on every weary nerve fibre like the blow of a hammer. I had just rolled the top of my desk shut, with the vision of a trout rod and the bogging fly dancing on the stream, when my stenographer entered with the remark that a woman was waiting to see me.

There are many times, as DeQuincy points out, when murder becomes a fine art, and its conception the acme of human desire. One such bore in upon me at that instant. A woman was the last thing I wanted to see just then, especially a woman with a complaint, a grievance or a “case.” I was about to refer her to my district manager when I recalled that he was on his vacation and would not be available for at least a week. With a sigh, I reopened my desk.



"You wished to see me?"

"All right," I groaned. "Show her in, but tell her to make it snappy."

The stenographer laughed and went out. A moment later the door opened to admit a tall, gaunt woman of about 50 years of age, upon whose countenance was depicted the very essence of fear and worry. She reminded me for all the world of an animal driven into a corner from which there was no escape. In one quick glance, I estimated her mentally as a woman who has been under terrific stress and who was rapidly approaching what psychologists call the "breaking point."

"You wished to see me?" I asked vacuously. There seemed nothing else to say.

"Are you Mr. Harris—himself?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied.

The woman sank into a chair that I slid toward her.



with a sigh that I took to be relief. Her hands twisted together and her eyes roved around the room. She gave every indication of being tremendously agitated.

"I—I want to talk to you—alone," she said. "I can't speak unless we are alone."

"We are alone," I assured her. "There is no one here but myself and my stenographer."

She seemed relieved. Then she explained.

"I want you to promise that you will never reveal my identity," she began; "never under any circumstances. I would lose my life if it was known that I had talked to you."

This was startling, to say the least. I scrutinized her carefully. She seemed sane and normal, save for the mental tension under which she was laboring. What could it all mean?

"You shall be entirely protected," I said. "Your identity will be absolutely safe. That is, of course, if you have not committed a crime. If you have done that . . ."

"Oh, no, no, no—not that!" she cried. "It is not I—it is . . . someone else."

She had whetted my curiosity, of which every detective, however blase he may become in the line of his business, always carries a reserve stock.

"Tell me what it is all about," I said quietly.

The words seemed to have a steadying effect on the woman. She drew up her chair, and placing a worn handbag on the corner of my desk, told me of the Mystery of the Nude Woman, as it had been unrolled before her eyes during the dramatic hours of several eventful nights. I give it here as she told it that day to me in my office, in her simple, frightened way.

"I live at Sixth and Rampart streets," she said. "My sister and I live alone. The neighborhood is very quiet

and the least thing unusual is immediately noticed. About six weeks ago a very striking woman and her mother rented a house not far from the corner. She is a very beautiful woman, with heavy black hair and wonderful features. The mother was a woman well along in life, but very active.

"I noticed, when they moved in, that very little furniture went into the house. It is a big place and the last family took away a whole van load. This couple had only a couple of bedsprings, a few chairs, a rug or so and several packing cases. These, with a piano, constituted the whole furnishing. It struck me as peculiar at the time, because they did not look like people who lived in that manner.

"You know how it is when strangers move into a neighborhood—everybody is interested in them. We noted very soon that no tradespeople ever called there. My grocer went over, but was told that they did not want him. The baker had a similar experience. The milkman was the only one whom they permitted to come into the yard. He left a quart of milk each day and took away the bottles from the preceding day. He told me they hardly ever spoke to him.

"One morning—it was about 2 o'clock, I think—we heard the woman singing. She had a wonderful voice, and, what was still more startling, she sang many of the operatic masterpieces. It was entertaining, although we did not appreciate the lateness of the hour. When, however, night after night, or morning after morning, at that unearthly hour, she repeated this performance, it grew to be annoying.

"This had been going on for about a week, when one morning, happening to look over in her direction, I saw her take a large, white Angora cat out of a washtub and hang it by its tail to the clothesline to dry. The cat fought

and scratched, but the woman held it with her hands until she was satisfied that it was dry. Then she took it down and carried it into the house. Needless to say, this gave me quite a shock and caused me to pay more than ordinary attention to her movements.

"The very next day there was a high wind. A large tree in the back yard blew down and a branch split off and fell into this woman's yard. She came out and bandaged the broken limb with strips which she tore from her underskirt. Then she carried it into the house, talking to it in a tender, wheedling voice. From this I began to suspect that the woman was insane.

"The following night I called on a neighbor who lived directly back of the apartment of this woman. We were startled to hear a stream of profanity in a woman's voice. Going to the rear window we saw one of the strangest and most surprising sights I have ever witnessed. The lights were on in the woman's apartment. The hallway was directly in our line of vision. At the end was a large, full length mirror.

"Standing in front of this mirror was the woman herself—absolutely nude. Her skin looked like chiseled marble, which was accentuated by her long black hair, which was trailing below her knees in a cascade of jet. She was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. But what gave us the creeps was the way in which she pointed into the glass at her own image and laughed hysterically. Now and then she would break into a stream of profanity and abuse.

"We watched the sight in fascination for several moments. Finally the woman snapped off the light and everything was quiet. We stared at each other. What did it all mean? What was wrong? There was no answer. We talked far into the night over it, but the woman's rooms remained dark, and I finally went home,



but not to sleep. I don't think anyone else slept that witnessed that eerie sight.

"A few days later I saw the little old lady, whom I took to be the girl's mother, sitting beside an open window knitting. While I watched, the girl rushed up to her, dressed in a peculiar yellow kimono, and, standing over her with upraised hands, began to scream.

" 'I've taken care of you long enough!' she shrieked. 'I've taken care of you long enough! You've got to die—to—die—to die! Tonight, at midnight, you've got to die!'

"The old lady smiled up at her and kept on with her knitting. If it had been I, I would have fainted right there from fright. But it didn't seem to bother her any, and after a bit the girl went away, and I heard nothing more from her that afternoon.



"Tonight at midnight you've got to die!"

"That night, however, we were awakened by the most terrific cries from the younger woman—wild, heartrending shrieks. It awakened the entire neighborhood. Then we heard awful noises, like the bumping of human bodies against walls and doors, and finally the most peculiar sound, as though someone was being hacked to pieces in a bathtub. It was the most terrible thing I had ever heard."

The woman broke off and fell to shaking all over. I stared at her in astonishment. No wonder she was a wreck, with a thing like that, rivaling in its mystery the wildest dreams of French Apache fiction, in the middle of the thickly populated district in Los Angeles.

"Go on," I said. "What did happen?"

"Oh, the most terrible thing," she continued. "The younger woman came out shortly after midnight in her yellow kimono. She had an umbrella tied over her head in some way. I could see her plainly in the moonlight. She had a spade, and while I watched her she dug—a grave!"

"In her yard?" Something of the woman's excitement had reached me. I confess it frankly.

"In her back yard," said the woman. "She dug only a shallow grave. I couldn't watch her any longer. When she went to the house I knew it was to get the body of that old lady. I simply couldn't see any more. I rushed into my room, crawled into my bed, and pulled the covers up over my head. My, God! Mr. Harris, you don't know what I've been through!"

She fell to weeping softly from sheer nerve reaction. After a moment she calmed herself.

"I peeked through the curtains this morning," she said. "The grave is out there in the yard. The woman has it all covered with potted plants, but you can still see the fresh earth. Oh, it's terrible!"



It was. I had to admit that myself. If what this woman had seen was correct, it seemed that she had witnessed, almost in detail, a cold-blooded murder.

"Have the police been notified?" I asked.

"No," she said. "I came straight to you. I was afraid to report it to them. For the woman is a fiend and if anything happened that she found out that I— Oh, don't you understand? I don't want her to know—"

I did understand thoroughly. Her attitude was a natural one. The picture she had so graphically drawn, spread out with all the vividness of a motion picture. Something must be done immediately.

"You go home," I said to her, "and wait for me. I'll get a couple of detectives and we'll go right after this thing. And don't be afraid—I shall protect you. No one will ever know a word of your presence here."

The woman thanked me and went out. A fishing trip with this thing at hand—a mysterious woman, posing in the nude, a midnight murder, and a hidden grave! Could any detective have wanted a "liver" case? It was the most amazing thing I had ever heard in my life.

It took but a few minutes to summon two of my detectives and get a couple of police detectives from headquarters. In a few words I explained the situation to them, standing in front of the police station. Detective Sergeant Joe Taylor, an old timer at the business, whistled.

"Great Scott, Nick," he said. "If that woman's story is true you have uncovered one of the big murders of the country."

The thought of this keyed us all up to a high pitch. Without more delay, we speeded out to the spot indicated by my informant as the home of the mysterious nude woman. We found the neighborhood in a high state of excitement. Leaving Taylor and Detective Sergt. Fred



Bowie, one of the central office men, recently killed by blackhanders, watching the house, Wm. G. Hanson of my office, and I scouted through the neighborhood for further information.

Directly across the back yard in which we saw, as my informant had declared we would, the freshly made grave, I found a woman with her two daughters. The mother, when I told her my errand, almost threw her hands around my neck.

"I never was so glad to see a detective in my life," she exclaimed.

She took me into the sitting room and there verified everything that the neighbor had told me. In the parlance of our childhood days the thing was getting "hot." After asking her sufficient questions to satisfy myself that the story I had heard was not a visionary belief of some imaginative woman, and receiving a verification of the mysterious sounds of the night before, I returned to the two officers on watch. Taylor motioned to me.

"For the love of Mike," he said. "Listen to that!"

In the silence of the little street, we could hear someone inside the woman's apartment on a terrible rampage, smashing furniture, shouting and throwing things around in all directions. Taylor and Bowie and I looked at each other.

"Sounds like another murder going on," I remarked. Taylor nodded.

"Well," he said, "let's move in on it."

Taylor, Earl Cowan, now resident manager of my San Diego office, and myself, went to the back door. Bowie and William G. Hanson, general manager of my office, walked up the front steps and rang the bell. The smashing continued, and no one answered the ring on the door. Bowie tried the knob. The door swung back a

short distance, where it remained, held by a heavy chain, sometimes used in old-style houses as a burglar lock.

In the meantime, Taylor and Cowan forced an entrance through the back way. The noise seemed to come from upstairs. I walked down the hall, unlocked the chain and let Bowie and Hanson in. Together the five of us started up the stairs in the direction of the sound.

Instantly they ceased! It was the most uncanny sensation I have ever experienced. One moment there was the greatest din and hubbub imaginable. The next—the stillness of a tomb, broken only by our own breathing. As we stood there uncertainly, undecided what to do next, there came a volley of oaths from a room at the head of the stairs in a low-keyed voice and a sudden command:

“Kill the first—blank—blank—one that sticks his head through the door!” said the voice.

“This is my house,” said a woman’s voice. “I’ll shoot them down like dogs.”

Pleasant thought that. Taylor, who was ahead, halted suddenly.

“Did you say this was going to be a nice party, Nick?” he asked in a whisper, turning to me.

“Not me,” I said. “But where did the man get in on this? I understood there were only two women here.”

Cautiously we crept up to the landing, while more conversation took place within the room, which we could not make out. And then:

“Get away from that door! Shoot through the panels.”

This in the heavy voice again.

I saw Taylor’s hand slip to his gun pocket and the whisked blue nose of his police weapon gleamed in the dull light. Taylor was a dead shot, and I knew somebody would get hurt if shooting started. He was an old

Scotland Yard man and a detective that never backed out of any emergency.

"Spread out in the hallway," he said. "I'm going through that door!"

I detailed Cowan to go outside and watch the front windows, to prevent anyone getting down that way. Then Taylor stepped forward and standing back slightly from the path of a possible bullet, he rapped sharply on the door. Hanson and I stood by his side.

"Open up," he commanded. "This is a police officer speaking!"

"Come in if you dare," screamed a woman's voice. "Come in that door and I'll blow your head off. Come on—I dare you."

Taylor stood motionless for a moment. Then he stepped back and hurled his bulk squarely into the middle of the panel of that locked door. It was one of the nerviest things I ever saw a detective do. He did not know what lay on the other side. He did not know but in the minute of his action a bullet would end his life then and there. It was all the same to Taylor. He saw his duty and he met it.

The door bulged, split and gave inward with a roar of splintered wood. It did not come clear of the frame, but hung part way open. We learned afterward that there was a steel plate screwed on it, against which was a steel rod braced against the door. But at the moment we thought someone was holding it from the other side. In a body we rushed to Taylor's aid, and the combined weight snapped the rod and released the door, and we went plunging head foremost in the room.

I will say frankly that every man in the party halted with his mouth open. There, backed into the corner of the room, which was littered with fragments of furniture and splinters from the broken door, was the woman we





"Do your worst!" she screamed.

sought—the mystery woman of the night—absolutely nude. She stood there, a scornful smile upon her lips, her arms folded—an angry Venus in white, just as Rodin might have sculptured marble into a perfect semblance of human flesh.

"Damn you," she screamed at us, "do your worst!"

There was not another soul in the room, not a human being but herself. It was a single room without a closet. Taylor stepped to the window. He met the upturned, watchful face of Cowan on the ground beneath. It was plain no one had escaped.

"What the . . ." began Taylor. Then he stopped. Into the queer, strained silence of the room, from

that beautiful nude figure in the corner, came another voice, a heavy voice, the voice that we had mistaken for that of a man.

"Leave this room instantly!" she said.

There was a sigh of relief from all of us. So that was it—a ventriloquistic gift, of parts. There had been no other person, only this. Then came the reaction.

One of my men got a blanket from a bedroom adjoining and we wrapped the woman in it. We expected a battle here, but she made no resistance. The scorn in her face gave way to one of bewilderment. After a bit she began to weep, and that part of our problem was over, for the time at least.

The real purpose of the affair was yet to be investigated. The old lady—

With a queer gone feeling in our stomachs, we pushed open the bathroom door, expecting to come face to face with evidence of a brutal, fiendish, insane murder. Instead we found an orderly room, neatly arranged, and nothing whatever to indicate that a crime had been committed, or that the old lady had been murdered. In fact, we found not a single bit of evidence of murder in the entire place.

We ended our search on the back porch. Taylor began to laugh.

"We have everything but the murder," he said.

"And the grave," I remarked.

"Oh, by George, yes," he replied. "Find a shovel, will you?"

I did. I found a couple. They were still covered with fresh earth. Taylor took one and I the other. For a seeker after sensation, there is nothing that will cure him quicker than the task of exhuming a murdered body. It cured me, and I have never been a sensational person.



It was, in fact, about the most difficult task I have ever tackled.

Every time I drove the point of that spade into the ground I expected to bring up short in human flesh. Taylor was in much the same frame of mind as myself. We dug and dug, carefully, cautiously, turning back spadeful after spadeful of soft earth, with the perspiration pouring from us in streams. And it was not a warm day at that.

Finally Taylor straightened up and looked at me.

"Nick," he said, "I've struck bottom."

I turned a couple more shovelfuls.

"So have I," I replied.

Three minutes' work and we had the grave empty. It was about three feet deep and the regulation six feet in length. But—there was no body in it and never had been. The woman in her dementia had constructed the grave and then filled it up again and placed the flowers on top. Right now I want to say that it was a tie between Taylor and myself as to which was the most relieved at the discovery.

The shallow grave, however, only deepened the mystery of the case. For right there ended all traces of the old lady, the supposed mother of the beautiful insane girl whom we had safely trussed indoors, away from possible harm. For despite a continued investigation lasting over months, in which police and private detectives and a score of agencies engaged, no trace of the aged woman was ever found!

The girl was taken in charge by relatives, who failed to furnish us with any clue in the matter. We dug up the yard from end to end and almost took the house to pieces with the assistance of the owners, but the efforts availed



us nothing. The girl was hopelessly insane. The mother had vanished into thin air. And the whole mysterious case is still on police records as one of the queer, unsolved chapters in criminal investigation for which there has been so far absolutely no answer.

## WITHERELL CASE

THERE have been many mysterious criminal cases on the Pacific coast, involving queer, bizarre or strange elements. But none was more inexplicable, more sudden or more completely without a clue than that in which the beautiful Mrs. Gladys Witherell was the central and tragic figure. And no crime was ever more quickly solved through good, old-fashioned detective work than this one.

Mrs. Gladys Witherell was the wife of Otto S. Witherell, a wealthy broker, whose home was situated in Hollywood, California. Of the family there was only Witherell, Mrs. Witherell and a baby to whom the parents were wholly devoted, and the servants. The couple were well liked, Mrs. Witherell being a popular social favorite in the set in which she moved.

On the afternoon of January 25, of this year, Mrs. Witherell was in the front part of the house, engaged in domestic duties, when her front doorbell rang. The baby was playing on the floor at the time. The servants were at the rear and Mrs. Witherell herself answered the doorbell. A gray haired man was standing there, his hat in his hand.

"Are you Mrs. Witherell?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"Well," he said, "an old lady has met with a serious accident over on the boulevard and is calling for you to come at once."

"An accident? An old lady? Who?"

Mrs. Witherell plumped the questions at him.

"I don't know, lady," said the man. "There's a lot of people there—they asked me to come . . . the old lady kept asking for you . . ."

"Just a minute!" snapped Mrs. Witherell.

Running indoors, she called some instructions to her servants. Then she caught up a tam-o'-shanter on the bed and ran next door to a neighbor's house.

"Will you watch the baby for a few minutes," she said, to the neighbor, her face drawn with anxiety. "Mr. Witherell's mother has met with an accident on the boulevard. . . . I shall be back shortly."

The neighbor was shocked by the information. She readily agreed to care for the baby. But she did not notice the direction Mrs. Witherell took with the aged man. . . .

This was at 6:30 o'clock. At 7 o'clock Witherell reached his home from his office. He found the neighbor caring for the baby.

"I think your mother has been hurt, Mr. Witherell," she said. "A man came for Mrs. Witherell just a little while ago. . . . He came to my place first and I sent him over here. She hasn't returned yet."

"My mother?"

Witherell ran from the place and jumping into his car sped to the spot on the boulevard where the neighbor informed him the accident had occurred. He found only a broad open boulevard with no trace of an accident along its entire length. Questions of passing motorists revealed no knowledge on their part of anything amiss.

Worried out of his usual calm, Witherell dropped into a corner drug store and telephoned all the hospitals, from the Central Emergency hospital in Los Angeles to a string of private sanatoriums, all without result. With these exhausted, Witherell turned to the police and told his story.



At midnight, six hours after the disappearance of Gladys Witherell, the telephone in my home jangled harshly, bringing me upright in bed, startled out of a sound sleep. Detective Sergeant Hurt of the Hollywood division was on the wire.

"Climb into your clothes, Nick," he said. "Gladys Witherell has been kidnapped. Mr. Witherell, his father and I are coming over . . ."

I hung up the receiver and raced for my clothes, thoroughly awake now. Gladys Witherell kidnapped! I knew her as a wonderfully pretty woman, who dressed in attractive picture clothes, and made a most charming picture with her baby in her husband's machine. Although I did not know her, I liked her as a man often likes a woman for the fresh cleanliness of the type for which she stands. I mentally resolved that if there was anything I could do to find the kidnappers, I would gladly do it without reservation.

Less than ten minutes elapsed before the whir of my apartment bell indicated that Sergeant Hurt had arrived. I opened the door to find him standing on the step accompanied by Mr. Witherell and his father, A. J. Witherell. There was a brief word of introduction. A moment later we were clustered around a table in my parlor—a little, tense group, all centered on finding the whereabouts of a beautiful woman who had left her home and baby to follow a false call for assistance brought by a shambling, gray haired man.

"My mother has not been hurt—is not hurt," said Witherell simply, summing up the matter. "I have notified everyone, police, sheriff's office . . . Will you help?"

I said that I would—gladly. Then I proceeded to ask Witherell a lot of questions. It seemed that he suspected no one—could think of no one who would have

a grudge against him or his wife. He was hardly ready to believe that she had been kidnapped. But to Sergeant Hurt and myself, both wiser than Witherell in criminal affairs, there seemed no doubt of this.

"Can't you think of a single person who might have a grudge against you . . . for anything . . . business, social . . ."

Witherell pondered.

"There was a former partner . . ." He broke off and his clenched fist banged down on the table. "By George!" he exclaimed. "On the way over here, I saw my private secretary, Miss B——, out riding with him. I didn't pay any attention to it at the time. . . . I wonder?"

Sergeant Hurt and I exchanged glances. The same thought struck us both. This was not only a clue. It had the earmarks of being a good clue. I said so.

"You think so?" asked Witherell in surprise. "Let's hunt her up, then. I know where she . . ."

"No, no," I objected. "Not that. Let her alone. Let her go where she pleases. If she is involved in this, it is a cinch she isn't in it alone. We want the whole gang . . ."

"Yes," broke in Witherell, "but while you fellows are doing all this, my wife . . ." His voice broke.

Sergeant Hurt laid a sympathetic hand on the broker's shoulder.

"Mr. Witherell," he said, "we will do the best we can, and we will work as fast as we can. But understand, we have no clues at all yet. If your wife has been kidnapped, she is probably going to be held for ransom. The kidnapers will take mighty good care of her . . ."

"For awhile, yes," retorted Witherell, shrewdly. "But later . . ."

We all knew what he meant. No pretty woman is

ever safe in the hands of a gang of men unscrupulous enough to attempt a kidnapping party. Better than he, we knew that, under ordinary conditions she would be better dead.

There was a brief discussion after that. Both Hurt and I cut it short. We had all the important information at hand and we were anxious to get to work. We finally separated for the night. Witherell promised to find out all he could about the antecedents of his secretary and the partner who had first given her employment with the concern.

The next morning the search for Mrs. Witherell started in earnest. The ordinary person, reading of such a hunt, with his morning Java and breakfast roll, has little idea of what is involved within the simple confines of the word "search." To him there is visualized a detective going in and out of hotels and lodging houses, studying crowds on the streets, scurrying through the underworld. But it is nothing of the sort.

Stripped of its glamor, it is merely a problem in hard work. The Paris police know that as does no other set of man hunters in the world, except possibly Scotland Yard. It consists of picking up threads—silently, quietly, secretly—the laying down of those threads in some back room by a couple of keen brained men, and discussing their values and tendencies. Now and then the threads catch, snarl, inter-twine and form a knot. Out of those knots is built the ladder by which the detective climbs to conviction.

The squad detailed to hunt for Gladys Witherell was a formidable one. It included detective Sergeant Louis Oaks (since chief of police), and Edgar King of the Los Angeles police department; Deputy Sheriffs Walter Lipps





Floyd and Arthur Carr (the kidnapers) and arresting officers.

and William Anderson of the sheriff's office, and myself with my personal staff of operatives. We assembled the following morning in my office and went over every angle of the case. There we mapped out our campaign in the man hunt, which had jumped into front page prominence on every paper in the city and was already a morning hour news sensation.

It was decided that I would take care of the shadowing of the secretary and her friend, the former partner of Witherell. That seemed to be the best angle of the matter. The police and the sheriff's office were to content themselves with handling the great number of "tips"

which always accompany the breaking open of a case of this nature. In this particular affair, more than fifty telephone messages and letters were received during that day from persons who knew of various strange houses and odd looking occupants that came and went to and from them. Unfortunately, these tips were valueless. They usually are. And yet, now and then, out of a bushel of chaff, there frequently turns up the psychological grain of wheat. And so they had to all be investigated. It was these stray bits of information that we all knew would take up the time of the police and sheriff's office. And so they gave us the real "live" tip on the understanding that if it developed from that angle I would be called in at the "killing."

The first day of our investigation was noted on the calendar as Wednesday. On that day four of my operatives, Brown, Fuentez, Morgan and Bacon, were detailed to "cover" the secretary and the ex-partner. To "cover" them meant that they were to keep as close as possible to them every minute of the day and night, overhear, if possible, any conversations the watched persons might have, see where they ate, where they went, what they did, and keep track of the thousands and one activities of their every day life, so that a detailed report could be made from it for office study.

It is the hardest part of the sleuth game—this constant trailing without being seen. It must be done astutely, cautiously, unostentatiously. It must be done so that the shadowed person will not suspect for a moment that it is being done. Contrary to popular suspicion, a person is not shadowed by the process of being followed by a detective. A detective may never follow him ten feet and still know every move that he makes. How is it done? That is a secret of the craft that will be told in another story later.



The shadowing of the secretary and the former partner turned up some strange things. For instance, the partner came into his hotel Wednesday noon with a half-tied bundle under his arm. As he went through a swinging gate, Operative Brown, who was sweeping the hallway of the building under the cap of a janitor, noted that he dropped a grey tam-o'-shanter hat on the floor—a woman's tam.

This fact reported to me caused a quick telephone call to Witherell. A grey tam? Yes—Mrs. Witherell had one. Did we have a clue? Perhaps—let him know later. Back on the job, with Brown still holding the wire. Anything else? No—the partner had picked up the tam quickly and thrust it into the bundle and gone out. Where?

Operative Fuentez, rolling dice in front of a cigar stand, directly across the street from the ex-partner's hotel, saw a man come out with a bundle under his arm. As the partner stepped onto the sidewalk, the janitor of the building came out and poured a bucket of water into the street. Instantly, Fuentez paid for his "shake," lighted a cigar and started up the street in the direction opposite to that taken by the partner.

Five minutes later, by some necromancy of the craft, Fuentez was a block ahead of the partner, on the same side of the same street, going in the same direction. He walked with a quick, swinging motion. Every second or so he would bring up his right hand to his face and take a puff from a lighted cigar which he carried in his fingers. Also he would take a quick look into a small condensing mirror which he carried cupped in the palm of the same hand.

Had the partner noticed him at all, which he did not, he would have seen a man walking ahead of him smoking. But Fuentez was doing more than that. He was watch-



ing every movement that the former partner was making. So accurate was his check on the latter's movements that when an aged gray haired man turned the corner and came face to face with the partner, Operative Fuentez knew it before half a dozen words had been interchanged.

There was a car coming down the street toward Fuentez. He stepped to the curb, signaled it, and stepped aboard. The car passed the two men in conversation on the corner—the ex-partner of Witherell and the gray haired man. Fuentez got a good look at both of them. Two blocks away he alighted from the car, walked to a mail box, fumbled with a letter and glanced down the street.

The two men had separated. The partner was walking toward the downtown portion of the city. Behind him was a man who looked mightily like a janitor off duty—hot on the trail of the partner. His concern therefore lay in the gray haired man. The latter had crossed the street and was proceeding toward the next corner.

Fuentez was two blocks away at that time. Five minutes later he stepped from the running board of a machine driven by Operative Morgan, that had pulled in "accidentally" at the mail box where Fuentez had halted to post a letter, thanked Morgan for giving him a "lift" and turned into an office building on the main street. There was a crowd waiting for an elevator. In the crowd was a gray haired man—the one who had talked for a moment to the former partner. Fuentez stood beside his elbow. They got off on the same floor together. The gray haired man walked down a hallway and entered an office on which was a real estate sign.

The hall emptied as the various persons turned into various offices. Fuentez stepped back, touched the elevator button, and was dropped to the lower floor. As

he walked out the front door, Operative Morgan—the driver of the machine, was standing on the sidewalk.

“Pardon me,” said Morgan, “but could you accommodate me with a match?”

“Certainly,” said Operative Fuentez. He fumbled in his pockets and handed over a box. “Room 408,” he said in a low voice.

“Thanks!” said Operative Morgan.

He entered the building, took the elevator to the fourth floor, walked directly to room 408, into which the gray haired man had entered, and opened the door. The gray haired man had his hat off and was sitting at his desk. On the door was the name of “James X——, Real Estate.”

“Are you Mr. X?” asked Operative Morgan.

“Yes, sir,” replied the gray haired man. “What can I do for you?”

“How do you stand on life insurance?” asked Operative Morgan, closing the door behind him.

An hour later he left Mr. X——, real estate dealer, in a very much relieved frame of mind. It had not been a pleasant hour for the real estate man. In that period of time, he had learned that the keen faced, quick-spoken man before him was not a life insurance man, but a detective engaged in unraveling an incendiary fire in his neighborhood, and only by the production of proper credentials, documents, papers and such things had he been able to properly alibi himself. Not a hint had been dropped that he was suspected of being the gray haired man of mystery who had lured the beautiful Mrs. Witherell away from her Hollywood home.

The movements of the former partner proved of even less interest than those of the real estate man. The latter, who had turned out to be an eminently respectable citizen, was absolved from all connection with the case.

The gray tam was discovered not to be Mrs. Witherell's. But it took hours of constant, detailed work to straighten it all out. And in the meantime the police and sheriff's office combed the city for clues, queer parties of persons, mysterious women seen at various places, and all the usual false trails given the authorities when matters of this kind occupy public attention.

The second day after Mrs. Witherell's disappearance, two letters arrived for Witherell by special delivery in the morning's mail—one enclosing the other. They determined absolutely beyond question that Mrs. Witherell had been kidnaped, for one demanded a ransom as the price of her liberty and the other was from Mrs. Witherell herself. The ransom letter read:

MR. WITHERELL:

"By the time you receive this you will have notified the police, but that will do you no good, as your wife is in a safe place where she will be kept until you have left \$20,000 next Sat. eve. at a place you will be told of later."

The letter from Mrs. Witherell herself was in her own handwriting and read as follows:

"I have been taken out here—don't know where—but, Lamie, do whatever is wished to help me come home. Please take care of my Jack baby—he had another spell with his teeth today. I'm not hurt, but help me quick or I will go crazy again.—Babe.

"P. S.—Lamie, I just learned that you must send money for me—\$20,000. I don't know what you can do, dear, but you must help me. Bettie W. can tell you how I got away. Please help me to come home; if you don't, I will never see you all again.

"GLADYS K. WITHERELL."



There was no doubt as to the authenticity of the letter from Mrs. Witherell. Her signature and her method of expression, according to her husband were distinctively her own. In the light of the unquestioned genuineness of the missive, the kidnaping angle became deadly serious. Witherell was for getting the \$20,000 immediately, but we pointed out that his wife was probably safe—held as hostage in fact—for the money, and that he had not, as yet, been told where to leave it.

“But God knows what is happening to her,” he protested.

“Nothing, I think,” I argued. “They want the money—not Mrs. Witherell. They will take good care of her.”

Although I was trying to be optimistic about the matter I did not feel as entirely free from worry as my words indicated. For a dainty, pretty woman of Mrs. Witherell's type is never safe at any time in the hands of an unscrupulous gang of kidnapers, no matter what the underlying motive in her taking was originally. Personally, I was very much afraid for her.

I expressed something of this to my associates from the detective bureau and the sheriff's office.

“We've got to get this outfit,” King said.

“You know it,” growled Sergeant Oaks. “All I want is a look at 'em. . . .” He doubled a heavy fist and I knew the final innings would be good—when they happened.

The one best bet seemed to be the former partner and the secretary, whose intimacy was still a matter of unexplained mystery in the case. Matters in this direction were brought to a crisis when Witherell reported to us that the girl had urged him to see a fortune teller for a clue to Mrs. Witherell's disappearance. Questioned by

Witherell the girl supplied the name of such a fortune teller.

We traced the fortune teller and found that the girl was a regular visitant there, going once or twice a week for "readings." It began to look now as though Witherell was being made the victim of a clever ring of bunko operators whose "ring" included the secretary, the former partner, and the men who had kidnaped Mrs. Witherell, with the fortune teller as a "come on" or influencer, dabbling with her mummery and ready to urge Witherell to pay the ransom money.

So strong was our impression in this regard, that we went up the next afternoon and had a long talk with this man. There were three of us—Sergeant Oaks, Deputy Sheriff Lipps and myself. We spent considerable time there, going into every angle of his possible connection with the case, on the theoretical assumption that he might be of assistance. He was cool, collected, politely interested but not disturbed in the least, and bowed us out at the conclusion of the interview without having contributed a scrap of information worth while or added to our suspicions or in any manner detracted from them.

"He's a hard nut to crack," said Lipps, as we walked down the steps. "Better keep a close watch on him."

That is exactly what I did, that being my portion of the case. As a result, one of my operatives telephoned me at 3:15 the following morning that the former partner and Witherell's secretary were at that moment at the Vernon Country Club and were accompanied by another man and a woman.

"They are drinking," said the operative.

"Stay with them," I ordered.

At 4:30 a. m. the four left the club in a fast machine. They swung out of the country club drive amid a chorus of cries and laughter—the usual accompaniments of reck-

less, all-night parties. My operative, in an equally fast machine, picked up the trail and did his best to cling behind. But it was an impossible task. With the empty boulevard before them, the quartet "stepped on the gas" and the last my "shadow" saw was a gleaming tail light flash over the crest of a hill and dip down the slant beyond.

At Thirty-sixth street the ride came to an abrupt and tragic end. The speeding machine crashed head-on into a Grand avenue car. The impact demolished the automobile and hurled its occupants in all directions. The former partner and the secretary were both killed outright and the other two injured.

The next morning at the morgue we stood beside the end of our only trail in the Witherell case—the two dead bodies of the persons we believed were responsible for the mysterious kidnapping of Mrs. Witherell. The other couple that had accompanied them on the last ride were in the hospital. We questioned them for more than an hour. But they proved to be only chance acquaintances and knew nothing whatever about the case on which we were working.

With the two persons whom we considered the main factors in the kidnaping eliminated, the big question now was: Where was Mrs. Witherell? Was she bound and helpless, in some unknown room, awaiting release? Would she starve before we could find her? With the lips of these two—the partner and the secretary—sealed by death, who could now reveal the unfortunate woman's hiding place?

These were the questions we put to each other in the next few minutes as we stood on the steps of the undertaker and fronted each other and the haggard, white-faced silent man who was constantly at our heels—Mr. Witherell himself. Right there the hunt for Gladys



Witherell became a personal matter with each and every one of us—just as personal a matter as it was with her husband.

This day merged into the next and that in turn into another, and still no word came from the kidnapers. We began to feel firmly assured that our original supposition was correct—that the brains of the kidnaping ring was dead, and that their hostage was tied helplessly in some back room, unable to send us word. We combed deserted shacks, the back rooms of lodging houses and scores of dwellings in all parts of the county without a clue. It was the most disheartening thing ever undertaken.

The third day following, a newspaper reporter got on the trail of the \$20,000 ransom letter which we had not given out to the press. He hounded us for a copy of it. Then and there was born an idea which I presented to my associates and which met with their instant cooperation. It was a bit of intended psychology—a fake ransom note. We would have that printed in the hope that the real kidnapers, if they were alive, would see it and be trapped into a denial—an attempt to protect their own ransom interests.

With all parties agreed on the possibility that the Witherell kidnapers might be “smoked out” by this means, I drafted the following letter:

“Your wife is safe. Don’t worry until you hear further from me. Have \$50,000 cash ready, as you will hear from me again soon. Don’t notify police or detectives, or all is lost.”

The trap worked better than we anticipated. Hardly had the letter—the fake ransom letter—been printed when Witherell received another letter in the handwriting of the first, telling him not to pay any attention to “the crooks that want \$50,000,” as they were not the people who had his wife in captivity. The letter said the

writer only wanted \$20,000, and in order to prove that they were the ones who had Mrs. Witherell in custody, they would let Witherell hear her voice over the telephone.

Witherell jumped at this opportunity, and acting on the instructions of a detective who was sitting at his elbow, he told the telephone company that if any calls came to his office for him to have them "plugged in" at his father's home in Hollywood. Then we began to map out our campaign for closing in on the kidnapers. For the letter had told us one thing—the secretary and the former partner were not the ones who engineered the kidnaping. On the contrary, the kidnapers were still alive and well. This determined, we knew what to do.

Through the general manager, Benjamin Wright, of the telephone company I made arrangements to have the wire chief watch any and all calls for the Witherell number. This done, we divided the man hunting forces into three divisions. Deputy Sheriff Lipps and Police Detective King, and Wigginton of my office, were stationed at Witherell's father's house. Oaks, Anderson, Morgan, Fuentez and I undertook to watch the house of W. F. Krats, father of Mrs. Witherell, as well as another residence belonging to James Fer Don, where we had arranged to "tap" a telephone circuit over which we could listen to any conversation to the Witherell home.

With the stage all set, there was nothing for it but to sit down and wait patiently for developments. The kidnapers had said they would permit Mrs. Witherell to talk over the telephone to convince her husband. It was for that that we waited, hour after hour. Witherell was everywhere, a wreck of a man, but showing heroic stamina and backbone when the strain under which he was operating was thoroughly understood.

Sunday evening at 10:15 o'clock, the telephone rang

in the "listening post" at the Fer Don home. I answered it. It was the chief operator of the main trunk on the wire.

"A man has just called the Witherell home," she said. "He is speaking from a public pay station in the A. & Z. drug store, 200 East Fifth street."

I made a swift calculation. That was too far away from us. But there was one better way.

"Get me police headquarters," I snapped.

The line popped. The next instant, with the chief operator holding everything clear, I had Lieutenant of Police Roy Shy on the wire.

We had arranged with Shy for a flying squadron at central police headquarters, for just such an emergency as this. When he heard her voice, he tumbled instantly that the long expected denouement had broken.

"Where?" he asked quickly.

"A. & Z. drug store, 200 East Fifth street," I replied hurriedly. "For God's sake, hurry."

Lieutenant Shy did not take time to say good-bye. She heard him shout something as he slammed up the receiver. The next moment the flying squadron from police headquarters flashed out of the central station, taking the traffic corners at forty miles an hour. In the machine besides the driver were Detectives R. B. Harris, Kahlmeyer, Carr, Curtis and Stelzide, all heavily armed. In the bottom of the car, loaded and ready, lay four sawed off shotguns.

The streets were comparatively deserted at that hour of the night. In the drug store where the telephone booth was located, a few patrons were buying late hour materials—a nurse with a prescription in her hand, an old lady looking at some hot water bags, a man at the cigar stand. Into the calm of the scene suddenly swooped a group of heavy set, determined men.



The drug store clerks thought a holdup was in progress. Four detectives appeared suddenly in the doorway. They ran quickly down the main aisle toward the telephone booth. The driver of the police car stepped into the doorway with a shotgun laid carelessly over his arm, the muzzle nicely covering the interior. A clerk slammed the cash register shut with a bang and ducked behind the counter. He was going to save his employer's money, anyhow.

The detectives halted at the booth. There was a man inside. At that exact moment he was just finishing a conversation with Witherell—a conversation in which he said, "Good-bye, Mr. Witherell, be sure and have the money tonight." As he hung up the receiver, the door of the booth was jerked open, he was yanked backward and landed in the center of a circle of detectives. Right then, he knew his game was up.

Three minutes later he was speeding to police headquarters in handcuffs—one Arthur Carr, conspirator, kidnaper and central factor in the abduction of Mrs. Witherell, while a bunch of scared drug clerks crawled out from under counters and asked each other what it all meant and why they hadn't been robbed.

Half an hour later we all moved in on Carr, officially and otherwise. There was no third degree about our questioning. We wanted Mrs. Witherell, and we wanted her quick, and we drove that idea home about as fast as a crowd of detectives ever drilled a thought into any one person's head. Carr held out for an hour and a half, and then broke down—collapsed completely.

He confessed that there were two of them in the scheme, he and his cousin, Floyd Carr, and that they had not harmed Mrs. Witherell, but had been holding her for ransom. He said she was confined in a little shack four miles north of the little city of Corona, about forty miles

from Los Angeles. He insisted that she was being well cared for.

At 1:30 Monday morning we started out to rescue Mrs. Witherell. Floyd Carr was on guard, so Arthur Carr said. We took Arthur along with us to avoid bloodshed. We arrived at the shack at about 4:30 a. m. All lights were out, and the rain was coming down in sheets. It was one of the nastiest, muddiest trips imaginable.

Sergeant Oaks of the police department took charge of the party, which consisted of detectives, deputy sheriffs, private operatives and newspaper men, twenty-one in all. Seven of us participated in the actual raid. The balance of seven machine loads of armed men scattered around the shack, lying low in the mud. Floyd Carr never would have had a chance had he attempted to escape from the shack.

With all in readiness and with Arthur Carr handcuffed securely to Detective Stelzride, we rushed the door of the little, dark, dismal, gloomy shack. The fastenings gave to the impact of Anderson, and the door burst in. We were in a kitchen.

Instantly the members of the posse spread out. Flashlights were everywhere, setting the shadows to dancing. In every man's hand was a drawn revolver or sawed off shotgun.

Mrs. Witherell. \* \* \* She was sitting up in bed, unhurt, uninjured, but terrified by the sudden avalanche of men and lights.

"Oh, Lamie, Lamie, Lamie!"

The sound of her voice as she held out her arms to her husband brought a lump to every throat there.

Captain Slayton of the detectives found a locked closet door. He dragged it open by sheer strength. There we found Floyd Carr, crouched in a corner, scared, nerveless, but with a .45 in his hand. Slapton feared to

shoot as Mrs. Witherell was in direct line of his fire. Oaks, Lipps and Anderson soon made short work of Carr.

This practically ended the Witherell case. There were certain legal formalities later, however. Mrs.



Mrs. Gladys Witherell and Baby Jack.



Witherell testified that the men had not injured her in any way, in fact had shown her every kindness. This had a great deal to do with the treatment later accorded the prisoners.

The men were placed on trial less than forty hours after their arrest. In fifteen minutes after the case began, they were sentenced to life imprisonment by Judge Sidney N. Reeve, and were on their way to San Quentin—one of the quickest dispositions ever recorded in the California courts.

Before they went to jail they confessed the motive, as far as one existed, for this strangest of all strange cases. They wanted \$20,000, and they picked on Witherell because of some fancied grievance over a boat deal. And Mrs. Witherell, without any other reason than that, was made the victim of their designs. That was all there was to it.

The Witherell case, once for all, sets at rest the allegation of theorists that behind every crime there is a stirring psychology. Behind the Witherell case there was nothing but greed, ignorance and opportunity. In the last element is found the open door for much of the unexplained crime of the world today, and which shows again that "Crime Doesn't Pay."

## THE MODERN BLUEBEARD

PERSONAL—Would like to meet a lady of refinement, of some social standing and in ordinary circumstances, who desires to meet middle aged gentleman of culture.  
Object: Matrimony. Ans. Box No. — etc.

SUCH were the words contained in certain advertisements, appearing at various times in both the matrimonial and other daily newspapers in the United States, during the years from 1915 to 1919.

I have often wondered how many times women, seeing this sort of an advertisement, have looked at it, shrugged their shoulders and said to their girl chum: "Let's answer it just for fun and see who the old bird is." Or perhaps their curiosity would get the better of them and they would even send their own or someone else's picture in the hope that they would receive by return mail a likeness of the other party. How many times these little "ads" have caused many people to really become acquainted with their soul mate, and happiness reigns ever after. But, generally speaking, I feel this could never bring real happiness. I could never really believe that two persons who were total strangers could honestly love each other by the printer's ink route. Yet, let's follow the trail left by this method of courtship and see if my version of it is true. Let's call the sub-title of this story "A Woman's Love."

### ON COURTSHIP TRAIL

"My dear Mr. Watson: Last evening after I had finished cleaning up the house and had just sat down to rest for a few seconds I spied your notice of your desire to meet a lady of refinement. Somehow, Mr. Watson, that appealed to me. I wondered if you were suffering the same as I; if you, too,

had wanted to find *just some one* who would share your life of happiness or troubles. Now, you know I never have paid any attention to such advertisements, but it strikes me as fate guided by destiny had placed that paper before me, and that is why I am going to answer your appeal. I seem to feel that I can trust you, that you will always guard and cherish any promise you may make me.

"Now, to tell you about myself—I am not very old, just thirty-five; tall and slender, weighing 147 pounds. I don't wish to flatter myself, but some people have told me that I am not bad looking. They say my dark hair matches my eyes and my teeth are even and pretty. Yes, I must tell you I have been married, but it was only a child's love; I did not know what it really meant. I was only fifteen and he was twenty-two. We ran away from the little town and came to a big city (Chicago). He soon sluffed off the little money we saved and it was not long until I had to go to work in one of the big department stores. Oh, how thankful I was that these big stores did not require trained help, because I had no money to live on while learning. Being rather pretty, I was made a stock girl in the cloak and suit department, and soon after my husband deserted me I was sort of chaperoned by a Mrs. De Vine, the department buyer. She used to tell me of all the pitfalls I would likely stumble into in a big city, and asked me if I would come to her home and live with her mother and sister. Oh, how good fate had been to me! The watchful, guiding hand of this old mother was ever by me, and the next ten years I lived to see myself advance from the position of a lowly stock girl to that of head of the department. For the past ten years I have saved the greater part of my salary, until now I own my own little home and have sort of retired from active work with a nice little bank account, which I figure will keep me moderately for a long time.

"Now, Mr. Watson, I don't know why I have unfolded my life's history to you; you, one whom I have never seen, but I guess it's just something magnetic. Then, again, perhaps it is *fate*, as I said before, or perchance it is that longing in the heart of a woman, a starved soul, a craving for company as God intended. So, Mr. Watson, please write me and tell me all about yourself and what you expect in a woman you would expect to make your wife.

"Yours very truly,

(Signed)

"MRS. JENNIE LEIGHTON,

"———City, ———State."



## IN RESPONSE

"MRS. JENNIE LEIGHTON:

"Your most wonderful letter just received, and I can hardly find words to express my sincere feeling of the high regard for the faith and confidence you have reposed in me. It seems as if the great heaven has opened and showed me for the first time in my life the real meaning of love. You say it was fate that has guided you. You say you don't know why you have unfolded your life history to me, a total stranger. Why, girl of my dreams, I, too, have the same feeling towards you. Pray, tell me, are you quite sure you really don't know me; are you quite sure that somewhere, somehow in this great world of the living we have not met? Can it be true that two souls with the same thought, the same object ahead, have never known each other before? No, my dear, that cannot be. We have felt the breath of each other's very lives. It surely must be the radiation of your sweet self that has carried me on and on through this vast space of earthly existence, all to bring but one ending. That to be the ultimate meeting of our "starved and hungry" souls, as you say, only to reap that happiness as originally planned. So, sweet angel of my dreams, let me try in my simple way to tell you about myself, as you have asked.

"I, like yourself, have just passed that middle mile-post, but unlike you, I have never been told that I was good looking. Perhaps, if you will allow me to say, I have certain personal traits which have been considered different from most of my sex. A difference, perhaps, that cannot just be explained, but ways that tell me what a woman wants; I might say loving ways, if I were allowed to tell them you might think me conceited. But I feel at this time that if I ever had an honest desire to make a girl happy it now has come to the surface as never before. But who, after reading your soul stirring letter could not find words to convince one that my main desire in life would be to prove to you that I love you, to prove to you that I would always guard and cherish your fondest love. Oh, sweet woman, I guess after all fate has even failed me in this hour of happiness to impress upon you just how serious I take your wonderful letter, so if you will bear with me I will try to tell you what little I can of myself. I have considerable property, and your paltry savings would never have to be touched unless it were to invest for you in some proposition or enterprise and which would double its earnings for your very own desires. I dare not send you my picture, because, as I said

before, I am not the handsome kind, so please, Dear Heart, send me yours; yet on second thought I know what you look like. How could it be otherwise after reading what you wrote. Now, I want you to write me, and I will come to you and tell you in person just what my beating heart has dictated.

So forever remaining your true soul lover, I beg to remain your own dear and trusted sweetheart,

“J. P. WATSON.”

### MANY VICTIMS

Such was the tenor of many letters that passed between this arch fiend to perhaps hundreds of unsuspecting and honest love desiring women. Of course, some did not fall for this “mush,” if we can call it such, yet others caught at the psychological moment did accept it as the truth. Perhaps some twenty-six. It is some of these I am going to tell about and how they were imposed upon, and later murdered by Gillum, alias Watson, later named “The Modern Bluebeard.” I am going to tell how he was brought to the bar of justice; how the same fate he so often wrote about turned against him and played a game that startled the world just a short few years ago. I will try to picture a story which may serve as a warning to our women and prevent such creatures as this Gillum from preying upon these love-starved souls, if it is possible to do so.

On the evening of March 31, 1920, my General Manager, Wm. G. Hanson, and I were about to leave our offices to keep an appointment we had made for a conference at a nearby attorney's office. The time of our appointment was near and we were both anxious to get away, when two ladies were ushered into Mr. Hanson's office. One of them stated she wanted some work done, but had no money. She said she wanted to find out where her husband spent his time and said he had taken some \$2,600 of her money to invest in a bank up north, but she had never been able to get anything out of him about it.

Also that he went away for several weeks at a time and she didn't know what he was doing.

Such was about the conversation that was to start an investigation which would unravel tangled facts, that, as I said before, startled the reading public of the world. Then again, the will of our God was to show His mighty power. Probably to the unbeliever, fate was to intercede. When and where could you expect to find a detective agency which would be expected to undertake an investigation of this kind without money. Of course, this woman said she would give us part of the money we might recover for her, but what were the chances of getting it for her? Think of the days, perhaps weeks of shadowing necessary to uncover the slightest clue for her. Then, again, was it not the ordinary family trouble so frequently brought to our office for investigation? Yet, fate was to play its first card.

As our previous appointment had to be kept, we called in Supt. Armstrong, of our Bureau of Identification and briefly explaining the case to him, told him to "dig into the facts and help the poor woman out." He did dig into the facts, and during the days following conferred with myself and my general manager, Wm. G. Hanson. The woman said she was Mrs. Walter Andrews and she lived in Hollywood. She was the woman who did all the talking. She said she was formerly Kathryn Wombacher, a dressmaker, from Spokane, Washington, and that she married Andrews in Spokane, November 8, 1919. She had first met him ten years before in Chicago. After her marriage they had moved to a little Hollywood bungalow. After their arrival there, Andrews told her he was engaged in secret service work and that he would have to be away from home a great deal of the time and for her not to worry. He did leave her for weeks at a time, until she began to doubt him, and when he would



not give her any definite information about her money she made up her mind to have him investigated by our office.

Fate No. 2—On Sunday, March 7, she said, he was away all night and on Monday, March 8, he took her to Catalina, and on the boat opened the mysterious black hand grip he always carried and showed her some Liberty bonds, several thousand dollars' worth, wrapped in a strip of linen cloth and said they were all for her.

### COINCIDENCES

Now, to mention Sunday, March 7, to any of my men was like throwing the proverbial red flag before a bull, because it was on this date that two burglars rang the night bell at the Fifth Street Department Store about 7 o'clock, telling the night watchman they were two Nick Harris detectives, and placed this store's guardian under what he thought was arrest, handcuffed him, tore some strips of linen counter coverings, and bound and gagged their victim, also a sweeper upstairs, and for two hours stayed in the store, blew open the safe and made away with \$32,000, a lot of Liberty bonds and private papers.

It was this that caused Armstrong to call me again and tell me he believed this fellow was mixed up in the Fifth Street Store job. I instructed my man to go the limit, spare neither time nor expense to prove or disprove his connection with this job.

Fate No. 3—In checking up further dates on which Mrs. Andrews said her husband left her, we found they were the same dates on which the robberies had been committed in banks at Hynes, Norwalk and Los Molinos, which naturally convinced us this fellow was one of the gang, and all efforts were put forth to locate our suspect, who, by the way, had left his wife for another brief spell.

On the evening of April 8, Mrs. Andrews phoned the office that she had heard from her husband, and he was to meet her at the Hayward hotel at 7:30. Armstrong,

knowing that I had gone to Gillmans Relief Springs, San Jacinto, to locate a girl who had for the past three years passed bad checks on our merchants, and all our division heads out of town, took up the case alone to get the preliminary lineup, so to speak.

He saw the very affectionate greeting of Andrews with his wife, who had been instructed to act as if nothing had happened or that she even doubted him in the least. She played her part well. After the meeting he started to take her to supper, but stopped just long enough to leave his mystery grip on the sidewalk while he went across the street to buy a cigar. My agent, thinking he would have time to borrow the grip long enough to see what was inside, attempted to get it, when the mystery man came out of the store. This necessitated his abandoning the plan for the time being.

#### HARD LUCK

The husband and wife then went to Armstrong & Carleton's restaurant on South Spring street for supper, while our agent waited. About that time two city detectives came along and were informed of my agent's suspicions, and one went in and took a "mug" of the subject, as we say in police parlance, while the other said he had to call the office and make their usual hourly report. Fate for these officers was to work against them. Someone at Central Station was waiting for them and they had to go. How they must have felt afterwards when the real facts were told to the world—the expose of the biggest crime case in modern times, and they might have been the arresting officers.

Armstrong, probably feeling the city police were not interested enough to stick with him, telephoned the sheriff's office, and Deputies Harvey, Bell and Robert Coutts, who had been assisting our offices on some other cases, responded to the call. I wish to say here that I believe

these officers appreciate the value of co-operation with any private detective agency. It is something that has shown itself so many times in my career and which so many public peace officers are prone to do. Combined efforts of several are far better than one lone officer working for selfish glory.

### ALL NIGHT VIGIL

These three officers followed Andrews and his wife to the Kinema theatre and from there to his home in Hollywood. An all-night vigil was maintained, and in the morning Andrews suggested that his wife go with him for a walk into the hills just back of his house. Was he going to add another victim to his already long list? Of course, the three watchers did not at this time even suspect the monster of being a murderer. No, they wanted to talk to him about these bank jobs and the Fifth Street Store robbery, and wanted to see what was in that pigskin grip. It was well Mr. Andrews changed his mind after walking a short distance with his wife, as there surely would have been a killing, and not as he had planned either. Coutts and Bell have for years been connected with the sheriff's office of Los Angeles county and could be depended upon to handle this fellow had he made one false move.

My agent in the meantime had entered the house and was trying again to get into the grip when he was startled by screams of Andrews, who had just been placed under arrest by Coutts and Bell, and was fighting and telling the passers-by that he was being held up by bandits. He finally was handcuffed and taken to jail. I was called, and there for the first time met the now famous wife murderer.

### DAMNING EVIDENCE

The grip was opened, and there before our eyes lay the mass of evidence that later was to be the means of



putting "The Modern Bluebeard" behind the gray walls of San Quentin for the rest of his life.

Seven marriage licenses, all with different names. Liberty bonds, women's jewelry, deeds to real estate and a mass of other letters from women, some of which we later found to be from the anxious parents of his victims, asking why they did not write, some begging for just a word of news, and others still believing the loved ones safe in the arms of their husband.

As I go back over the days following this investigation I often wonder why some hot-headed citizen hadn't started a lynching party and strung this arch fiend up to the nearest pole, but I guess it was because our case had not been proved. Perhaps it was because of the same reason District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine had to make the recommendation he did. We had not proven the *corpus delicti*. Yet it was no fault of the officers who were investigating the matter, because we all know that not one speck of evidence was overlooked. We knew the murders were committed, yet where were the bodies? No one knew, no one held the key to unlock this hidden closet—no one but the man himself.

When we asked him about all the things in the grip, he professed total ignorance, saying he had bought the grip at the Wells Fargo sale and all the stuff was in it at the time. What a beautiful alibi, what a wonderful "out" for himself he had planned! But as usual with all criminals, their carefully laid schemes fail just at the time they feel so secure, just when they think nothing has been left undone. Then to see this air castle crumble to the ground because of the one fatal slip; the slip that can always be found by careful investigation. Such was the trick that Fate No. 4 had in store for James P. (Blue-

beard) Watson, Gillum, or Andrews or whatever other name he had.

### WHAT THE TABLET TOLD

It was a plain writing tablet, one of those carried in every stationery store, on which he used to have his wives write their names at the bottom of a blank page. He always managed to get it there somehow. We found several, and when we asked him about these names he would always say he found this tablet in the grip when he bought it. We kept digging through its pages, until along at the end or last sheets we found the name of Kathryn Wombacher. It was the name of my client, the woman who called at my office to have us find out why he left her so often, the woman who did not have any money to pay us. To him it was the cord that was to pull the curtains behind his beastly existence; to him it was the one thing he had overlooked.

When confronted with this evidence he refused to say anything more. He knew he was trapped, he knew his fatal day had come. He could not bluff us further.

Couts and Bell took him to San Diego the next day to open some safe deposit boxes, while my agents and I took two of the living wives to Santa Monica to identify the contents of a trunk my agent had located in a rooming-house in that city.

It was while going on the latter trip that a very strange thing happened, which has impressed me as one of the greatest incidents of our investigation. It will impress every home-loving woman, I am sure. It was this: We had located another living wife, a Mrs. Elizabeth F. Williamson, of Sacramento, who married Watson August 28, 1919, under the name of Harry Lewis. I had taken her and Mrs. Wombacher to the beach, as I said before, and as we were returning I was seated between them in the back seat, and we had just seen all





Uncovering the grave of Nina Delaney, Bluebeard's twenty-third wife.

the articles in the trunk, and found the blood-stained fur of Nina Lee Delaney, whose body we later dug up from a mountain grave in Imperial county, and who had married Watson December 5, 1919, under the name of Charles N. Harvey. Mrs. Williamson suddenly dropped her head and seemed about to break down, when Mrs. Wombacker said: "Dear, don't give up now, when the officers will need our help so much. Just think how fortunate you and I have been that we are alive and well and these other poor women are perhaps lying somewhere out there in unknown graves."

"Yes," said Mrs. Williamson, "I know, but I am not going to break down; I was only thinking, thinking how I used to sit up, just a short time ago, and put up jelly and jam and how I would always put up a jar or two in his grip when he would make those trips, because I knew he would not be able to get any at the hotels he stopped



in, and to think how ungrateful he could be to deceive me so."

Mrs. Wombacker spoke up and said: "Dearie, was that currant jam you made?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Williamson.

"Well," said Mrs. Wombacker, "he used to bring it all to my house and we would eat it."

Can we really appreciate just how serious this really is, just the touch of woman's hand, that lasting thoughtfulness of a true, loving wife?

### TRIES SUICIDE

Meantime, Coutts and Bell were having "some party" of their own. They had stopped the car at San Juan Capistrano, and, in a most mysterious manner, Watson secured a knife and after getting back into the machine succeeded in cutting his throat from ear to ear. For nearly twenty miles he rode thus until he could be taken to a hospital, where, later, he cut the arteries of his wrist. It seemed that the same fate was not to let his ending come in that fashion. After a few weeks he recovered, and perhaps fearing the death that mortal "man-made" laws would mete out to him, he planned how he could, if possible, prevent it.

It was then that he called Under Sheriff Manning to the county hospital, and, as I was told, offered to make a confession if he would be granted life imprisonment in California. What else could the prosecuting officers do? What could District Attorney Woolwine gain? No evidence of a murder sufficient to convict in court could be produced. Where was any dead body? No one had ever seen one that proved to be a wife of Watson. So, what was best, convict this beast of a lesser crime and perhaps soon have him out of prison to practice again his dastardly habit on some more of our unsuspecting

women, or reason the case from every angle, and if his confession involved an admission of murder convict him and confine him to San Quentin for the balance of his life? Such was the problem that confronted Mr. Woolwine. He could do nothing else than that which he did. Yet, down in my heart I know that he would willingly have given his right arm if he could have sent "Bluebeard" Watson to the gallows.

Just how many wives Watson married and how many



Bluebeard Watson receiving sentence,

he killed will perhaps never be known. We have record of some sixteen. Others say twenty-six. He confessed to killing seven. We believe more. So, may the great God in his wisdom guide the minds of the future prison officials of California so they will never permit this monster in flesh and blood again to insert an advertisement in any paper, stating that he would like to meet a woman of refinement who desires to meet a middle-aged "gentleman of culture." May God forbid and protect a woman's love.

From the facts above given, and from the facts that afterwards came out at the trial, is there any other moral lesson to be learned that may in the future prevent any such similar case being flaunted before the eyes of the world's reading public? If there is, I must confess I would rather some one of a greater mind than I possess try to deliver it to humanity.



## THE OLD MAN'S VIOLIN

SEATED in the quiet seclusion of the smoking room of one of the select country clubs not far from Los Angeles, five prominent business men were gathered after making the rounds of eighteen holes, when one of them broke the silence. "Nick," he said, "the life of a detective must surely be full of thrills and interest." This remark had many times before been shot at me, and usually caused to be started a tale of some blood and thunder yarn, peculiar to my vocation.

The conversation drifted from the topic of recent murder cases lately blazoned in glaring headlines in our daily press, to the arts and wiles of the crafty bunco artists, who played their game either on the shores of Miami or under the sunkissed skies of southern California.

"Speaking of bunco games, I know of one that's got the world beat." It was—I will call him, Abe Goldsmith speaking. There is hardly a resident of Los Angeles who does not know this shrewd and careful business man. And when he added that he was the victim, we just naturally stopped and wondered how it happened.

"Shoot, Abe, and give us the low-down," one of the party said, and we all settled down deep into the thickly overstuffed furniture, amid the blue curling smoke, which drifted windward only to mingle with the aroma of the fragrant fumes of newly opened orange blossoms.

"Nick, you remember when we had our shop on Main Street. Well, it was in the early nineties. That was before the autos crowded and jockeyed their way

into position with the street cars. When a little, dinky one-horse cab drew up to the curb, and an old man of about seventy opened the door, paid his bill and entered our store.

"Under his arm he carried a violin case. His long white silver locks seemed to glisten in the warm afternoon sun. His once blue coat was beginning to turn an old rose color. The style of his tie suggested to me that he was a musical artist—perhaps of the old school.

" 'Are you the proprietor?' he asked of me, in a quaint and mellow voice. 'I am one of them,' I snapped back.

" 'Well, would you be so kind as to let me leave my violin here? I am going to Pasadena, and I am getting old; I am really afraid I might lose it.'

"I took the case, and started to place it under the counter, when the old man reached out his arms and said, 'Oh, don't put it there, please, put it in your safe; this has been in my family for the past three generations, and was given to my great grandfather in the old country. I prize this above all my earthly possessions.'

"To satisfy the old man's whim, I did as he asked. He watched me as a child would watch one with its cherished toy.

" 'Thank you so much, I will be back later,' he said, and with a stately bow he left.

"A day, a week, a month passed and he did not return. I was getting anxious, thinking perhaps he had forgotten where he left this heirloom. Perhaps he had died. Many times before people had left things and never called for them. My thoughts were interrupted, when one of the clerks came into my private office, and said some people wanted to look at some violins.

"I left my chair and went to the front counter, where

a very stylishly dressed man and woman were waiting. The air of wealth seemed to radiate from both.

“ ‘I would like to see something in a good violin,’ said the stranger. ‘When we were in Berlin a few seasons ago we picked up some very wonderful buys in a pawn-shop there, and now my wife has the old fever creeping over her again to dig into the archives of your sort of place, and wants to get a violin.’

“I took down several instruments from my shelves, ranging in price from \$50.00 to \$200.00. The girl would examine each carefully, play a few strains, only to pass it back, and ask for something better. I guess I showed her at least fifteen, in fact all I had. But none suited her. They thanked me for my trouble and asked me if I would direct them to another pawn-shop.

“I was just about to send them down to Joe Zeman-ski's, when I happened to think of the Old Man's Violin, hidden in the safe.

“ ‘Just a minute,’ I said. And more to satisfy myself that this instrument was all that the old man said it was, and also to see if these people really knew a good thing when they saw it, I hauled it out and told them to try this one.

“With careful precision the woman ran the bow across the strings, and really the notes seemed sweeter than any I had ever heard before. She played a strain or two from popular operas, and said to her escort, ‘Dear, we will take this one.’

“The man asked the price, and started to reach for his wallet. I was in a quandary. What could I say? It wasn't mine, and was not for sale. Naturally a man in my business should not be taken unawares and I had to parry for time, until my brain would telegraph my speaking apparatus. I answered, ‘What do you want to pay



for an instrument?' It was the only thing I could think of, perhaps force of habit.

" 'Price means nothing to me, if it suits my wife,' he flung back, and right away started talking in *thousands*. I finally worked him up to *ten thousand dollars*. Then I told him the violin belonged to an old master, and doubted very much if he would part with it. I then told him a beautiful story of how the great grandfather of Kaiser Franz Joseph had given this to the great grandfather of this old master, and I recall now how these two customers glanced at one another as I went on to tell of the history of this brown, aged, worn box.

"Again I was stumped when they said they would take it at that price—\$10,000. I still wondered how I could get rightful possession. Where could I find the Old Man? How could I deliver the goods? My mind was working in circles; I must confess I was bewildered, when I happened to look in the top part of the case and there I saw a small card. It read, 'If found, please return to Nathinal Bridges, 143 N. Falling Leaf Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.'

"At last I saw a ray of hope. Gathering my business senses together, I suggested that if he would leave me a \$1,500.00 deposit I would get in touch with the old music master, and try and buy the violin for them. To this they agreed, and gave me with his check a card on which his name was printed. Said they were stopping at the Van Nuys Hotel, and asked me to call them if I could make the deal.

"Had I known in those days, the value of fast auto service, I would surely have called Pico Two, or some other taxi number, but as it was I called a hack and first going to the bank, and cashing the check I proceeded to the Falling Leaf Ave. address.

"It took me some time to find the place, way out in

what is now Hollywood district. There nestling beneath some pepper trees, stood a straight boarded rose covered California house.

"In response to my knocking, a gentle faced old lady came to the door. I asked if this was where Mr. Bridges lived. 'Yes,' she said, 'but he is sick in bed. Won't you come in?'

"Hat in hand, I entered the living room. There in the corner sat an old fashioned three cornered curio cabinet. On the walls I saw hung oval, black walnut frames, containing the pictures of my music master and his wife.

"Technical directors of today movie circles would surely have been in their glory, for a setting like this. Typically old-fashioned in every respect. I was ushered into a bedroom, and there propped up in pillows, sat the old gentleman, looking mighty like a "he" angel.

" 'Well, my friend, I have been looking for you, a long time,' I said. 'I wondered what had become of you, and today I found the card in the case and thought I might find you here.'

" 'Ah, 'tis well, my good friend, but I knew my violin was in good hands. You see I was taken sick on the car and had to come home, and my good little wife has been taking care of me. Did you bring my violin back home to me?'

" 'Well, no.' I stammered. 'You see I was not sure that you lived here, and then, besides, I came to see if you didn't want to sell it.'

" 'Oh, no, no, my friend, that I could never do; you see I have had it so long. I love that violin better than anything else in the world, next to my own dear wife. No, she would never let me part with it. When will you bring it back to me; I will pay you well for your trouble?'

"For nearly an hour I tried to argue with him. See-

ing this impossible I tried my persuasive powers on the old lady. To her I unfolded this tale:

“‘You see the reason I am so anxious to buy your husband’s violin is because my little boy of twelve has been taking lessons since he was six years old, and just yesterday he was in my store and I showed him your husband’s violin and he asked if he could play it just once.

“‘Since then I have had no peace with him. Then again, after all, is it not my duty to provide my child with the best? I have spent money on his education and I feel if I can buy this from your husband I will have done my duty—the duty a father owes his son. Please talk to your husband.’

“The old lady re-entered the bedroom and talked for some twenty minutes. Coming out, with her face wreathed in smiles, she said, ‘For your boy’s sake, he will sell it. How much will you pay?’ Again my mind jumped to financial business. I bid \$1,000. Not accepted, then \$2,000 and \$3,000, until the price got up to \$7,500. He accepted, and he asked if the old lady could go back with me and get the money? I was glad. ‘Sure,’ I said, ‘and I will send her back in the hack, too!’ It meant for me just \$2,500 profit. Didn’t I already have the \$1,500 on deposit and the \$10,000 offer?

“On the way to town the wife told me how her husband would miss his violin, but that she had always been the business part of her family and he was the artist.

“At the bank I paid her and sent her back rejoicing.

“Now to close the deal! I phoned the Van Nuys and asked for Mr. Charles Atherton, Room 321. The clerk said they were not in just then, but would be back later. He said they had gone to Mount Lowe and might stay all night at Alpine Tavern.

“Knowing how pleased the little wife would be to get the violin, I called on Long Distance, The Alpine Tav-



ern. 'Is this you, Mr. Atherton?' I asked when the phone rang. 'Yes,' was the reply.

" 'Well this is Mr. Goldsmith, and I have made the deal. I am sorry to bother you now, but thought your wife would enjoy the sunrise from Mount Lowe so much better tomorrow, if she knew she could have the violin when she came back.'

" 'Fine, Mr. Goldsmith. I congratulate you on putting it over, and we will be back tomorrow afternoon. How late is your store open?' he asked.

" 'I'll be here until 10:00 p. m.,' I said.

" 'Great Mr. Goldsmith, keep the violin in the safe until you see me.'

"Now, fellows, that's the story—I still got the violin.

"They never came back. An empty trunk and a few toilet articles on the dresser were all the detectives ever found; we did hear that a father and mother and son and daughter-in-law were seen going through the turnstile at the Santa Fe depot the same day I phoned to Mount Lowe.

"I am still out just \$6,000, less \$1,500, the real price of the Old Man's violin; also, the two trips of the little cabby to that rose covered cottage, and the phone call to Alpine Tavern; and the worst of it all is, my boy don't play a violin."

Reaching for his golf bag, Abe said: "Let's go out and play another nine holes."

## MURDER OF FATHER HESLIN

IN ONE of my earlier stories of this series, I recounted the opinion of Jimmy the Rat, concerning his views on the subject of circumstantial evidence. How at one time in his life, this sort of evidence might have been the cause of his unhappy ending by the legal hanging route. Yet, Jimmy was not only innocent of the crime for the murder of a prominent banker but actually never saw this banker, either dead or alive. Still, circumstances were such that Jimmy was the only possible person who could have committed the crime. He was robbing the home of this man at the exact instance of the banker's death. He was seen leaving the place; was arrested in the front yard and had the plunder from his job on his person. He spent many fearful hours in prison and wondered how Fate had played such an unjust prank on him.

Investigation later revealed that this banker met his death by a most strange accident. He had gotten up early to catch a train and had gone to the bath room to shave. In pulling an electric light chain to get more light, he received a shock which caused his right arm to jerk back just as his razor was passing over his throat, cutting his jugular vein and resulting in his instant death.

It is cases like these which causes the average person to shy at convictions involving circumstantial evidence. We fear the unjust punishment of a fellow-being as a result. We think how many times in after years a conscience-stricken soul turns up and admits the murder for which the poor victim, through hasty action of some courts, has paid the price with his life.

On the other hand, cases have come before the bar of justice in which no eye-witness has ever testified to the actual killing, yet circumstances were so clearly brought out by the prosecuting officers, it left no doubt whatever in the minds of those who knew all the facts.

Such was the case in the Larson murder a few years ago in the pretty hills of Casa Verdugo. The Luitgerth affair in Chicago wherein the murderer dissolved the mutilated body of his wife in his sausage making machine tanks. Now in this story I am going to tell the strange and bizarre circumstantial facts connected with the murder of Father Patrick Heslin which tied such tight knots around William A. Hightower that he was sentenced to life in San Quentin penitentiary.

#### PRIEST RECEIVES CALL

Nestling in the shadows of the Catholic church in the Parish at Colma, California, stands the little cottage occupied by this unfortunate priest and his housekeeper. Lights in his study plainly showed this gentleman busy over his papers, drafting his next Sunday's sermon, when about 9:15, the night of August 2, 1921, an auto was heard to stop in front of the house and shortly the door-bell tingled the message that a visitor was calling.

The housekeeper answered the bell and was met by a strange man who inquired for Father Heslin. The holy man came to the door and was told that a man of his parish was dying and would he not come and give the last rites. Reaching for his hat and necessary vestments, Father Heslin rushed out with the stranger on the mercy call. The machine was heard rumbling away and the housekeeper again returned to her unfinished duties. This was the last time she ever saw her master alive.

Twelve, one, two and three o'clock passed, still the priest did not return. Realizing the nature of the call, the housekeeper was not unusually alarmed so retired to



her bedroom. However, on the following day when he had not returned she began to worry and reported the matter to her church officials and they in turn reported the facts to Chief Daniel O'Brien of the San Francisco police. He placed the matter in the hands of that master officer, Captain Duncan Mathewson who was in charge of the Detective Bureau. The hunt for Heslin was immediately started.

On the second morning the bay city residents were startled with the news displayed in glaring headlines on the front pages of the great dailies of this metropolis, telling of the receipt of a ransom letter addressed to St. Mary's Cathedral. It was not directed to anyone in particular but simply to St. Mary's Cathedral.

Archbishop Hanna had delivered it to the police. It was a scrawly printed envelope and great attempt had been made to disguise the writer's handiwork. The contents of the letter was typewritten and many phrases of it plainly showed that the sender was not such an ignorant person as might be supposed or intended to convey.

### THE DEMAND LETTER

August 3, 1921.

Act with caution for I have Father of Colma in bootleg cellar where a lighted candle is left burning when I leave. At bottom of candle are all the chemicals necessary to generate enough poison gas to kill a dozen men.

As he is fastened with chains you will see that he is in a very bad way and if I am arrested or bothered in any way I will leave him just where he is and in two hours from the time I leave him he will be dead. The candle will not burn more than an hour and a half after I leave him for I cut it at that length.

If the door is opened to this cellar by anyone except myself, it will ignite a bunch of matches and upset a can of gasoline on top of him, and the entire police force and all your damn knights would not be able to get the chains off of him before he would burn to death.

*So the one best bet is for you to get the sixty-five hundred dol-*

*lars in fives, tens, twenties, fifties and hundreds and be sure there is none higher than that and that there is no marks on them for if anything arouses my suspicion, I will have him die right where he is. I had charge of a machine gun in the Argonne and poured thousands of bullets into struggling men and killing is no novelty to me; besides it will be your own bunch that will kill him if you do not do just as you are told.*

Get the \$6,500 in unmarked bills in package and seal it for the two men who will handle it before it gets to me; they think it is dope, so don't leave it unsealed or it might not reach me after you have sent it.

Have car ready with spotlight and you will get instructions which road to take and you will turn the spotlight upward and drive slowly until you see a white strip across the road. Then stop, get out with the money, leave car and follow the string that is attached to white strip until you come to end of string. Then put down package and go back to town and remember your brother does not get out until I have the money and am in the clear besides an . . . (here are about eighteen words undecipherable by being smeared with ink) . . . and he is complaining of the pain when he is not gagged so he cannot make a complaint. Better have a doctor ready with you, and be at the house where he lived, and wait for the instructions messenger with the instructions what road to take. *Remember! Just one man in that car,* and he had better be careful for if he looks suspicious he will be tagged with a hand grenade, as have six of them ready for any treachery.

And the waiting man will not be seen at all, and he will not see the man to whom he passes the package and the second man gives it to me. But remember, if the cops are notified or any move made that will make it dangerous for me, I will not send you the instructions how to find him and release him. Besides if this becomes public it will be seen how easy it is to trap your bunch of imposters, and others will go and do likewise.

"Nuff sed. It's up to you."

You will get the message about 9 o'clock at night, perhaps tonight, perhaps tomorrow night.

The following is printed in ink:

Had to hit him four times and he is unconscious from pressure on brain, so better hurry and no fooling. Tonight at 9 o'clock.

As a result of the receipt of this letter much comment was naturally caused; much speculation was rife. Some thought the Black Hand of Mafia was again at work and then some wondered if Heslin had a past. How unjust the public always is pending the uncovering of the truth! The usual number of anonymous tips were sent to the police and all had to be run down. It took lots of Capt. Mathewson's time for nothing was overlooked that had been suggested.

The world was wondering, when after seven days had passed and no other word was received from the kidnaper for surely Father Heslin had been kidnaped and was being held for ransom of \$6,500.

#### DETECTIVE RECEIVES CALL

I had just opened a branch of our offices in San Francisco when my secretary notified me that I was wanted on the phone.

"Harris speaking," I answered.

"Is this you, Nick?" came from the other end. "This is North—come right over to the office."

John North was the news-editor of the San Francisco Bulletin. He and I were reporters on Los Angeles papers together, long years before I ever dreamed I would follow the sleuthing profession. He stuck to the news game and has proven one of the greatest feature writers in the newspaper world.

The smell of newspaper ink greeted me as I swung open the door to the editorial rooms. Johnny was humped, shirt sleeved over the city desk, shooting copy to various scribes; penciling stuff before him and receiving telegraph copy all at the same time. He looked up, saw me and said: "Nick, Major Pickering wants to see you." (He was the managing editor.) North kicked back his chair and led the way.



"Nick," the Major said, "North has a hunch and wants you to help find Father Heslin. Can you do it?"

Could I do it? It seemed the impossible. I, almost a stranger in that "wonder" city. There confronted with the mighty in the newspaper field. Then again, if I failed to make good for these people, I was doomed. All these thoughts passed like a whirlwind through my befuddled brain, when good old North came to my rescue by stating:

"Nick, for seven days Heslin has disappeared and we have rehashed all the dope until I am ashamed to let our paper hit Market Street. Now if we can inject you into this mess, it will be something new and you will get a million dollars' worth of advertising for your San Francisco office. But remember you are employed by the Bulletin and no leaks."

I saw one grand ray of hope. No other detective ever had a better chance. "Sure, Major, I will do my best"—and I meant it; but what could I do to get a start?

"All right, Harris, you and North for it," said Mr. Pickering.

We left his office and returned to the clatter of the typewriters in the big room over which John was boss. North told me all the facts of the case to date, in substance the same as aforementioned.

"Will Captain Mathewson work with us?" I asked.

"Sure he will. He is one of the best Dicks in the game," said North. "I will give you a card to him and tell him that you are coming and represent this paper. Now, what's your lead?"

Again I thought of what would happen to me if I failed. I must hit on some logical plan and try to work it out. "Johnny," I said, "what do you think of this scheme?" I told him what I had in mind, and he said, "Great, go tell it to Mathewson."

## MEETS CHIEF OF POLICE

As I hopped off a Kearney Street car a few minutes later in front of the Hall of Justice, a pile of masonry with its cell houses some ten stories up, I wondered just how I would be received by these real Metropolitan coppers. Yet, they had always been kind and courteous to my agents in times past and they knew I had always cooperated with the police in cities we ever worked in, so I thought perhaps they would listen to my plan.

I was first ushered into the private office of Chief O'Brien who gave me the hand of welcome right from the start and said he would call Mathewson.

We three gathered around a table and I unfolded my scheme as follows: "Gentlemen, please don't think that I am coming here from any paper or other city to try and tell you how to work this case. I have been officially sent here to render such aid and co-operation that my past experience affords. I do not know how to make a cake or pie but if I ever made a cake and when finished, I found it fell in the center, I would know that I had left out something and the next time I would not make the same mistake. Just so in this case, as you gentlemen know, we in Los Angeles just finished a kidnaping case there, that of Mrs. Gladys Witherell. All our law forces banded together. Detective Sergeants Edward King and Louis D. Oaks, and of the police department, Walter Lipps, and William Anderson of the Sheriff's Office who had charge of the investigation for their offices, cooperated with my agency which had been employed by the Witherell family. There was never a moment of selfish glory displayed by any of us. We all pulled together.

"Now in this case I notice several similar phrases in the Demand Letter you have received and the last one received by Mr. Witherell which read as follows:

## WITHERELL RANSOM NOTE

*"Mr. Witherell: After following up the different leads the police haven't found where Gladys is located so you see it is no use for them, they have nothing to work on so if you are going to meet the demands and will go out Valley Boulevard until you come to a red light lying on the ground leave the money in a bundle well wrapped, turn around and go back to the city and in less than ten hours Gladys will be home, that is if you do so alone and don't try to catch the ones sent for the money as they could not give you any information where she is and it would only make the amount demanded raised at least half which would have to be payed anyhow. Follow the above instructions and everything will be O. K."*

The letter was unsigned. After reading this, I said: "In the early part of the case, Mr. Witherell received the first ransom letter demanding \$20,000. We figured that if we could withhold this letter and give out another letter demanding more money, we would confuse the minds of the kidnapers and they would do something they would not otherwise do and expose themselves. We wrote a letter demanding \$50,000 and it had the desired effect. As soon as the kidnapers saw the contents of this letter in the press, they hurried a letter to Mr. Witherell, telling him to pay no attention to the party who wrote the \$50,000 letter, as they were only a bunch of crooks trying to collect the money and did not have his wife, but *they* had her and would let him (Witherell) hear her voice over the phone. This gave us the tip and we arranged with the Telephone Company and covered the phones. After three days of waiting and with the aid of those wonderful telephone operators at Central and Hollywood exchanges, we were able, with the further help of the flying police squadron, to land Floyd Carr as he



was talking to Mr. Witherell on the phone at 10:15 the Sunday night following. Now, gentlemen, if we can put over some such similar stunt we will interrupt the plans of Father Heslin's captors and they may do something that will uncover themselves."

Capt. Mathewson thought so well of the plan that he called one of his lieutenants in and it was decided that I would write a letter demanding \$15,000, addressing it to Archbishop Hanna. Then have him give it out to the press.

We called on his grace, the Bishop, and he consented to the scheme. It was understood that he was also to give out a statement that he did not believe the first letter asking for \$6,500 was authentic, as we feared damage might have been done in publishing the original letter, as the kidnaper would know he could not deal in confidence any longer. Then again, this first demand letter had been addressed only to St. Mary's Cathedral, as I mentioned before, while our letter was to be sent to the highest church official and the kidnapers would now know just who they were to deal with.

Let me interrupt my story for just a minute. Some might say it is not good policy for me to expose the manner of catching these crooks but permit me to explain that this has already been done at the time of arrest of the Witherell kidnapers, as well as Hightower. Then again, no matter how often or how careful these evildoers plan their nefarious doings, they will always leave an opening through which the long arm of Justice will reach in and take away the prize they were striving so hard to get.

We then left the Bishop's home and I was delegated to write a mystery note. Seated in one of the musty offices of the city jail I penned the following:

## THE FAKE LETTER

*"Archbishop Hanna:*

*"Don't be surprised to get this. It is to tell you Father Heslin is not dead. Neither is he injured yet. Fate has made me do this. Sickness and misery have compelled my action. I must have money. Please forgive this act if you can.*

*"Have \$15,000 CASH READY.*

*"You will hear from me very soon.*

*"The manner in which this is to be paid will be revealed to you in my own way VERY SOON. In fact now that the excitement has died down, Father Heslin is safe and says for you to help him.*

*"Have money ready for my future instructions. You will hear from me VERY SOON.*

*"You will know I'm the right person if I will have the piece of paper that fits to this letter."*

The letter was torn off diagonally on the right lower hand corner. This letter was also unsigned and was to be smuggled under the door of the Bishop's office by my agent, Lieutenant Claude Morgan. In the morning it was to be found by his Grace's secretary, James Cantwell, and delivered to the Bishop, who in turn was to give it out to the press.

As soon as the letter was penned, I hurried to the Bulletin office and reported our success. It must not be overlooked that this was to be a scoop for the paper I represented. Now as I look back I deeply appreciate the serious position this procedure would place Chief O'Brien and Captain Mathewson in. How were they to explain to our rival journals how this letter was first published in our paper which was on the streets just one-half hour before any other competitive sheet. O'Brien stood the gaff fine and naturally had to pass the buck or blame to Mathewson. I think it got me in rather bad with the Captain afterward as the papers sure were hot about the deal. Yet, after all, these men, including the rival edi-

tors, were all big men and any other paper would have done the same thing if Fate had so ordained. So, if Captain Mathewson reads this story, he will know I deeply felt his position.

The next day all the afternoon papers flooded Market Street with extras concerning this new break. Of course our paper claimed only the glory of the scoop, nothing more. Later developments might give them the real crack they were waiting for.

### HIGHTOWER SHOWS UP

The first extras were out about ten o'clock that morning, our paper one-half an hour ahead of the rest. Less than ten hours later, a gaunt, wiry fellow was seen loitering around St. Mary's Cathedral and was trying to see the Archbishop. He had inquired for him but just why he did not get to him perhaps we shall never know. He was possibly one of hundreds.

*Again the genius of news gathering showed its hand.* A reporter on the San Francisco Examiner had been stationed at the Cathedral and was told to cover the spot and learn what he could. There were detectives, both police and private, there also.

The reporter saw this fellow and heard him ask for the Bishop. It was a hunch, or "that something" which comes over a reporter in times like that. He warmed up to the fellow and asked what he had.

"I know where Father Heslin is buried and I want to see the Bishop," he answered, or some such similar statement. That was sufficient for this news hound. He weaned the fellow away from the Bishop's study and into the Examiner's office where the fellow told an amazing story of how he met a girl of the streets and she had told him of how she had met an Italian who carried a gun which caused her to shrink with fear and she asked the Italian why he carried it. The Italian said, "It had



killed a man and he had buried the body but a man cooking flapjacks was guarding it." He said, "It was on the cliffs of Salada Beach."

Hightower (as he said that was his name) further told the newspaper men that he had gone to Salada Beach after hearing this story and thought he had found the grave and could take them to it.

The journalist in charge called Chief O'Brien, photographer's staff, writers and police to accompany Hightower. It was nearly midnight or perhaps later when the little party, now including Constable Landini of Colma who they picked up on the way, left their autos on a spot at the boulevard where they saw one of the Albers signs (the picture of the miner cooking flapjacks over a fire). They plunged into the sandy waste, led by Hightower to a spot, nearly three quarters of a mile from the road, until they came to one of the hundreds of little crevices high up in the palisades that border the ocean in this section.

By lantern light they started digging, Hightower more active than the rest. He was pushing his shovel quite deeply in a spot when Landini cautioned him to be careful as he might hit the dead priest in the face. Without a second's hesitation, Hightower answered, "No, this is where his feet lie."

That one remark; that telltale sentence. Yes, it was to have a lot to do with another sentence later. Landini said nothing more then, but he did a lot of thinking, as did all the rest of the party.

They found the unfortunate priest; his coat had been removed; a blood clot showed at the base of his brain where a bullet had entered, shot by his assassin from behind, perhaps when he was told that the dying man that he was coming to see was down in the tent covered pit,

which was afterward to be his own tomb. Such was the finding of Father Heslin.

His body was taken back to the big city; a sorry cortege followed. As a result of Hightower's thoughtless remark, the finger of suspicion was gradually rising. He was questioned. Hightower said he wanted the \$8,000 reward offered by the church for the finding of the body of Father Heslin. A possible motive for the crime. He knew a reward would be offered, for once before he had received a reward for finding a dead body.

Mathewson and District Attorney Brady and Assistant District Attorney Golden of San Francisco conferred with O'Brien and District Attorney Franklin Swart of San Mateo county. They decided to check his story. Meantime, where was the girl who told Hightower? She could not be found but they searched his room and there found a tent; two stakes were missing. Two stakes had been found in the grave of Father Heslin. Sand in the folds of the tent was analyzed and it was the same as that found in the crevice grave at Salada Beach.

An improvised machine gun was also found in the closet of Hightower's room. A machine gun had been mentioned in the demand letter. On his bed was a copy of the first extra edition of the paper I represented.

He was arrested on suspicion for his story did not check. The police found the typewriter he had used in his demand letter; they found the auto he had rented and it registered just the exact number of miles to Salada Beach and a drive he said he had taken with this so-called "dream girl." He tried to have this dream girl swear that he was with her on this fateful night. This girl was finally found and she was the only Dolly Mason he knew but she would not lie for him. She told the truth; how she had left him about 7:30 or 8 o'clock on this night at

the corner of Market and Powell streets, after a short drive. That would have given him plenty of time to have gone to that little parish home at 9:15.

Such was most of the evidence—all circumstantial. He was convicted and sentenced to life, perhaps because some of the jury were also skeptical about that sort of evidence. Perhaps they would rather give him the benefit of the doubt, as long as he was not to be hanged. Perhaps that is why our state must support him. Perhaps that is why Jimmy the Rat was skeptical.

As for my making good to Major Pickering and Mr. North, I will leave that to the reader. I hope my fake letter really had the effect we thought it would. I hope Hightower saw the story and fearing some one was going to get the money, tried to gain an interview with the Archbishop and bumped into that enterprising reporter, whose name I am sorry I cannot remember, but who, in the opinion of Mr. North, only strengthened our theory, but nearly wrecked a darn good yarn for the Bulletin.

Great credit should be given District Attorney Swart for the masterful way he handled the prosecution of this famous case, as it was considered one of the most hotly contested legal battles in the criminal history of California.



## FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH

THERE is a queer cabalism in numbers—in the value of numbers, in the association of numbers with events. The ancients held that numbers were everything. Later this was forgotten, to be again revived today in the light of new spiritual growth. Now there are many who are asking what really lies in numbers. What do they mean? Why are some numbers bad and others good? Where lies the necromancy of their power?

To those who have long dealt with crime in its varied and complex phases, come, retrospectively, long chains of circumstances closely connected with numbers, the figure "13" stands out oddly malignant—oddly connected with strange bizarre crimes. French literature notes the "mysterious 13" of its inner police history. German superstition marks "13" as a negative combination. With Hindu and Aztec, Chinese and early Aryan—there is the queer avoidance of this odd association of "1" and "3" that stirred even the oldest Jewish races.

Scoffers pooh-pooh this idea, and yet they listen half credulously to tales of evil that have followed in the path of "13" wherever it goes. Confronted with criminal records, they stand abashed. For more murders have happened or are associated with the figure "13" than with any other date in history. One such which opens the field of widest speculation is the famous Larson case in Casa Verdugo, near Los Angeles, in which Friday, the thirteenth, 1913, played a conspicuous and dramatic part.

The story begins on Sunday, June 22, 1913, on a Sunday such as only the Southern California weather man,

long versed in tourist attraction, can construct with seasonal perfection. Along the foothill range which sheltered the little hamlet of Casa Verdugo, "loveliest village of the plain," the golden light filtered through the trees and dripped upon the grass beneath like molten ingots. The air was fresh with the fragrance of sage, and honeysuckle and wild flowers.

There was a picnic in Casa Verdugo that day. Happy groups scattered over the hills, searching for flowers, singing and dancing over the sward. One pair—a boy and a girl—became separated from the rest. There was a shady rustic path that led into a sheltered canyon. A few steps along the rocky bed and they came to a nook formed by overhanging trees.

"Let's sit here awhile," said the girl dreamily.

The man sank by her side. There was absolute stillness there—the stillness of a summer day, broken only



"Let's sit here awhile!" said the girl.



by the shrill of myriad insects and wood folk. As they sat motionless and quiet—

The groan of a woman—!

The girl jumped to her feet in terror. There was something queer about the note. It was a gagging, strangling groan. The girl and boy stared at each other. Then by common consent they began to search the underbrush.

The groaning continued for a second and then stopped altogether with a queer muffled cry that turned their blood cold. The sound only increased the determination of the young couple to solve the mystery. The boy went ahead, a heavy stick clenched in his hand.

Suddenly the girl gave a sharp scream and pointed. The boy followed her outstretched finger. There, within a few feet of the spot on which they stood were the feet and legs of a woman projecting from a clump of brush.

Investigation disclosed the murdered remains of a



Within a few feet of the spot, lay the body of a woman!



woman about forty years old. There was every evidence that the killing had been of the most fiendish nature. The body lay on its side. The skull had been literally smashed to pieces by some blunt instrument. The woman's hair was matted with fresh blood and her clothing badly torn. On all sides were evidences of a terrific struggle.

Mastering his repugnance, the boy knelt and laid his hand upon the woman's breast. It was still warm. They knew then that while they had sat in the little glen, steeped in the romance of the golden day, this unfortunate unit of human life had died within a few feet of them. For there was no doubt in the world but that the woman was dead.

"I will notify the authorities," said the boy.

Together they ran back and gathered the rest of the picnic party, telling them what had happened. There was a rural telephone line in a nearby farmhouse and within a few minutes the wires were singing with the result of the Casa Verdugo murder—the brutal killing of a defenseless woman in the lonely foothills outside of Los Angeles. Within an hour the sheriff and coroner were on the spot and the merciless wheels of justice had taken up their restless grind.

Quick examination of the dead woman revealed a fragment of a broken gold chain around her neck—a chain that had once held a watch in all probability. There was no trace of the watch around the body and the balance of the chain was missing. But the tiny fragment furnished a clue—the only clue—that developed at that time.

The body of the dead woman was taken to the morgue in Los Angeles. Curious hundreds called to view the remains in an effort to identify her. Hundreds more tramped the hills near Casa Verdugo, over the spot where

the crime had been committed, searching for souvenirs with all the avidity that characterizes certain perpetually morbid elements of our modern civilization. It seemed probable that had the officials overlooked any of the earlier clues, they must have been destroyed by this stampede over the scene of the crime.

For three days the woman lay at the morgue, while curious throngs passed and repassed the body in an effort at recognition. In the meantime the girl's clothing was turned over to me, on account of my policing department stores, in the hope that some identification might be made there. The hat I found had been purchased at a local department store, but no record of the purchaser had been kept. With the corset we developed what seemed like a clue.

The corset was a style No. 407, H. & W. manufacture, size 24. Two of this style had been sold in Los Angeles—one to a woman whom we found alive and well and the other to an unidentified woman, of whom no one had a record. It seemed probable, therefore, that this had been the murdered woman, although a canvass of the clerks in the corset department failed to reveal any who recalled selling a corset to a person of the dead woman's description.

The days slipped along, with the police at sea and the identification unmade. Now and then someone would wander into the morgue, take a look at the body and give an exclamation.

"Why, I know her. That is Mrs. So-and-So."

Detectives would rush and find Mrs. So-and-So alive and the identification would, in police parlance, "blow up."

Among the details that had been noted on the dead body was the absence of a wedding ring. A close examination of the fingers of the left hand, however, by the

autopsy surgeon revealed the fact that there had been a ring there, but that it had been stripped from the finger some time before death.

The police paid little attention to the absence of the ring. But the circumstance made a deep impression on one of my operatives—Frank Grey, a live wire, who had the reputation of using his head on occasion. Grey had once known of a case where the identification pivoted on a wedding ring. The missing ring kept bothering him. One day he called me on the telephone from Glendale, which is a small town near Casa Verdugo.

“Nick,” he said, “what do you say if we go out and have another look at the spot where the body was found?”

“What do you expect to find?” I asked him.

“I don’t know,” he replied, “but that missing ring—you know, we might find that ring there. It wouldn’t do any harm.”

“All right, Frank,” I replied. “I’ll come out in the machine this afternoon and we’ll give it the once over. What is this—a hunch?”

Grey laughed.

“Perhaps,” he said. “Anyhow, I want to see the spot.”

With nothing more as a motive for the trip than the gossamer filament of Grey’s intuition, we proceeded to the scene of the murder. As we rode along, Grey talked about the case.

“You know,” he said, “if we find the ring there might be a set of initials in it—”

There was a chance of that, of course. We had my wife, my agent Bob Albert, Jimmy Pope of the Herald along—Jimmy of the “big stuff,” who thought in headlines and talked in brevities.

“Eight column stuff!” he remarked.



"What is?" I questioned.

"That ring," he chuckled. "That is, if you get it."

That was just it. If we got it. And we didn't.

It was a dull, drizzly day—a queer foggy, overcast sky contributing to the general gloominess of the situation. Grey, Pope and I climbed out of the machine and poked about in the underbrush until we found the spot where the murdered woman had lain, trampled down now with the marks of hundreds of curious feet. It was not a promising prospect, and yet how often does a detective have a promising prospect on which to work?

There seemed nothing there which would in any way furnish an additional clue to the woman's identity. We examined every stick and stone within a score of feet of the spot. Finally, Albert called out to us and stood upright. In his hand was a tiny scrap of paper no bigger than a dollar, on which was written some words. He had found this under a bush. I found more of the little pieces. Pope found some more—half a dozen in fact.

Sitting down on the ground we pieced them together. Reconstructed, they formed a receipt. It read:

No. . . . May 31, 1913. Received of Mr.  
Larsen, \$50 for rent of . . . street for month  
ending . . . 191 . . .

S. HICKSON.

I looked around carefully after that, finally picking up a copy of a newspaper under date of Friday, June 13, 1913—a torn, fog soaked, dirty fragment of a paper—just enough remaining to give us the date and the name of the paper itself. With this and the receipt, we returned to Los Angeles to pick up what seemed to be a possible new clue in the affair.

Jimmy Pope went to work on a telephone directory. From that we learned that "S. Hickson" was a saloon keeper on East First Street. We called in deputies of

the sheriff's office. We called on the man, and found him a genial, talkative sort of person, perfectly willing to give us any information he possessed. Then we showed him the receipt. His eyes opened.

"Why, say," he exclaimed, "this is a receipt I gave to my neighbor, Larsen, who runs a barber shop next door." It developed that on Saturday nights Larsen would bring his cash into Hickson's place to put into the safe. Hickson, being a careful person, always insisted on giving Larsen a receipt for it, which he made out on a stock rent receipt pad.

"Did you give him this receipt, Saturday?" one of the deputies asked.

"Yes, I did," said Hickson. "That is, I gave him one like it. He must have several. Where did you get it?"

"We found it out in the country," we told him.

Hickson nodded his head several times.

"Well," he said, "he told me he was going out into the country, Sunday—"

Garfield Gillis stepped forward with his own question.

"Did he take anything from here with him?" he asked.

Hickson thought a moment.

"A couple of bottles of beer," he said. "Yes, that was it. I remember now. He bought a couple of bottles to take along on a trip. I wrapped them up in a piece of newspaper for him."

Grey and I exchanged glances. We had picked up a couple of beer bottle tops at the scene of the murder. Then I pulled out the newspaper dated Friday the thirteenth. Hickson took the paper and turned it over in his red, spatulate fingers. Then he looked at the date.

"That's it," he said. "He was in Saturday and I remember I wrapped the beer in the paper of the day before—that would be right—Friday, the thirteenth."

We thanked him and went next door. Larsen was shaving a customer, who happened to be Detective Sergeant Fitzgerald of the Los Angeles department, recently killed by Little Phil Alguin, a Mexican bandit. We waited until he finished. Fitzgerald, seeing the three of us together, tumbled that something was wrong and waited around.

"Larsen," Pope said, "we want to see your wife. Where is she?"

He turned white.

"She—she went to San Francisco, Sunday," he said. "I took her to the train, myself."

Whatever suspicions we had in mind crystallized at the moment he answered the question, by the instinctive alibi he built up for himself. "I took her to the train myself," he said, even before we had asked him a single question.

"Are you sure of that, Larsen?" Pope asked.

"Yes," he replied. But it was not convincingly done.

"You didn't go out Casa Verdugo way, did you, Larsen?" we asked.

"No!" he almost shouted.

"Are you sure of that, Larsen?" Pope asked. "Better take a minute and think it over."

In the silence that followed I could see the beads of perspiration come out on his forehead. Finally—

"I took her to the train, I told you."

Gillis grew restless. He started to look around the shop. There was a seat locker in one corner of the room, such as barbers customarily use for storing extra linen. Gillis walked over to this and lifted the seat. Larsen stared at him, his face the color of a death mask. Gillis gave him a quick look and then, diving into the locker, brought up some spare towels. In the bottom something glittered.



"Come here, fellows," he said.

We walked toward the locker. Larsen gave a frightened, trapped glance toward the door. Sergeant Fitzgerald, without any cue from the men, eased his huge bulk directly into the doorway and stood looking at Larsen with an expressionless face. Gillis dived again into the locker and held up some object.

It was a gold watch—a woman's watch with a broken gold chain attached.

"Ever see this, Larsen?" he asked.

He was shaking all over now.

"No—no," he chattered. "I don't know how it got in there."

"What are you shaking for, Larsen?" cut in Fitzgerald suddenly.

"I'm not shaking—it's cold," said Larsen.

Outside the sun was registering 80 degrees in the shade.



It was a woman's gold watch with a broken chain.

In the locker along with the watch and broken chain, we found a roll of films. We took these and Larsen to the police station and held him for investigation. The identification bureau took charge of the films and developed them. In the dark room we got the last link that connected Larsen irrevocably with the brutal murder of his wife.

The films were pictures of scenery around Casa Verdugo—snaps the murdered woman had taken on the day of her death. One was a portion of a little glen in which she had been beaten to death. Another was that of a young woman.

In the last named we found the keynote of the murder. Larsen's daughter—a little girl—gave us a clue to this woman's identity, and she proved to be a young girl in whom Larsen was interested. She gave us every assistance when she discovered her connection with the affair and through her instrumentality much that had been mysterious in the affair was cleared up.

Larsen, she said, had promised to marry her as soon as he secured a divorce from his wife. From the child we learned that the mother had had a premonition of her impending death.

"If I do not come home, Mary," she had said, "you will know papa has killed me."

The crime, as we saw it now, consisted in the cold blooded luring of Mrs. Larsen to the deserted spot in the Casa Verdugo hills, where she was beaten to death with a heavy weapon; in fact, two broken bottles of beer were afterwards found, to make way for the murderer's romance with a younger woman.

Larsen was hanged for his crime. In the minds of all of us who had worked on that gruesome, ghastly

case, there will always remain this unanswerable question, as a dramatic aftermath of its sensational elements:

What part did the superstition behind that unlucky date—unlucky as the world calls it—Friday, the thirteenth, 1913—found on the newspaper which Larsen carried in his hand on that fatal day, play in bringing to justice the perpetrator of the awful murder in the sun tipped hills of the Casa Verdugo? Showing conclusively “That Crime Doesn’t Pay.”



## THE PASSING OF SERGEANT FITZGERALD

PERHAPS no time more apropos than now could be had to tell the inside story of the facts that lead up to the killing of Detective Sergeant John J. Fitzgerald, just when Louis D. Oaks, Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, is speeding on a train to take into custody the murderer of this beloved officer and returning him to Los Angeles to face trial.

My acquaintance with Fitzgerald runs back to the year of 1908 or 1909. I was then connected with one of the local newspapers, and used to live out in the West Adams district. Fitzgerald was a motorman on the old traction line. I used to ride with him almost every day. As I would see him throw the juice into the wheels and notice his quick head work in avoiding accidents and observed his bulky six-foot frame and smiling Irish face, I thought what a good policeman he would make.

One day, going home, I said, "Fitz, why don't you get on the force? That pays more money than you get here, running the car. I think you would make a good copper."

"Do you think I could make the civil service?" he asked. "Sure," I answered, "if you will see me at the city hall, I will show you how to make out the papers and help you get the necessary vouchers."

The very next day this chap called me on the phone and I went with him and did as I promised. A short time later, I missed him from the regular run on the car line and next saw him when he came to show me the new

blue uniform he was decked out in. Such was the starting of Fitzgerald, the policeman.

A few years later, he advanced to the rank of detective sergeant and many times after, we used to talk of how he first got started. For many years he worked with Tommy Zeigler, a veteran detective, and from whom he learned to become what we in the police game call "smart." Later, he was detailed with Cahill, another wise "dick," who was his pal. He worked with Cahill until the "call of the West" took him out.

One of Fitzgerald's premier jokes was one he thought he had on me. I was returning from San Francisco on the Owl one night, having just arrested in San Francisco a woman check forger, who had victimized about all of the big department stores in Los Angeles. I had a San Francisco policewoman with us. I quite naturally was putting forth all my officialness and dignity before my prisoner and sister officer, when Fitzgerald, who was returning on the same train, stuck his head into our compartment and yelled: "Nick, did you ever work on a big case in your life? Most of your stuff is just little petty jobs, ain't it?" I knew the Irish devilment was just creeping out of him as he ducked out of the compartment just in time to miss a good sized book I sailed after him.

Yet, how strange, now as I think of it. These same words were the last words he ever said to me on the fatal night to follow just a few years later.

### DETECTIVES INVESTIGATE TIP

On the afternoon of June 18, 1921, I received at my office a tip from the underworld that a gang of crooks had cached under a certain kitchen floor in a cottage some seventeen packing boxes loaded with women's silken under garments, valued at several thousand dollars, and which were said to have been stolen from the J. W. Rob-

inson Company and Bullocks, big Los Angeles department stores.

I called the central detective office, out of courtesy, and got in touch with Detective Sergeants Yarrow and Mailheau; also the State Pharmacy Board Inspector Peebles. Accompanied by Agent Wigginton, of my office, we went out to raid the place, said to be located in a little cottage near Watts. We raided the house, but found only a happy little mother and father of a baby boy of one year. They were at the supper table. The father was cooing to the little shaver and trying to feed him a piece of sliced tomato handsomely draped over the side with a spoonful of mayonnaise.

The little family was so intent on this little chap's epicureal desires, they failed entirely to note us four officers covering them with as many guns. They almost fell dead from fright when they did see us and thought they were being held up. However, to make the story short, we found they were innocent and that there was no cellar in the place, and that it was the wrong number and that I had made a rotten mistake.

I felt very cheap over the affair and between the kidding of Yarrow and Peebles, I wished I had kept my mouth shut in the first place. However, somewhere else in the files of high class literature there is a saying as follows: "If you fail, try again."

So I turned to the fellows while we were riding back to town in the auto, and told them I had another tip on some narcotic burglars. The gang who were supposed to be robbing all of the drug stores.

One of our crowd said, "Nick, they're out hiding in Maggie Jones kitchen cellar. I think they are drinking some of the same bootleg you must have had when you brought us on this bum "steer." This wise crack sort of threw a damper on my detective genius, and some of



the coppers said they were going home and said "Good-night."

As luck would have it, Teddy Mailheau lived out in my district and he, Wigginton and myself were left in the car. I, still feeling blue at the fluke I had made, still wanted to hold my reputation at least with one of the gang, and so said to Ted:

"Let's take a run out to this address and size up the joint and see at least how things look." He agreed, and Wigginton directed the car to 2392 West 32nd Street. As we drove in front of the house, we noticed a high-powered car standing in the street. In the darkened doorway stood the forms of four men. We had that irresistible hunch that comes over a detective sometimes that there stood the bunch we were looking for.

We decided that we would drive around the corner and come up behind them and see what they were going to do. Perhaps we could catch them in the act. We would try. We circled the block, only to find upon our return the birds had flown. The house was dark. It was then after nine o'clock.

We got out of our car and walked past the place hoping to pick up some clue; what it would be, we didn't know. There was a light in the house next door. It poured out of the front room. It was on the corner. The curtain was up, and through the window we saw a man in his shirt sleeves. He was writing and smoking a pipe. He looked like a good and respected citizen; one we thought we could trust. We all decided to take the chance. It was our one best bet. Perhaps he could tell us of his neighbors. It was at least a good gamble, and one of the chances an officer has to take in confiding in some one when on a hunt like this.

Mailheau rang the bell.

"What's wanted?" said the man as he slightly opened

the door and turned on the porch light. "We are police officers," Mailheu said. "Could we speak to you a moment?"

"How do I know you are officers?" the man shot back.

I showed him my badge and said, "My name is Nick Harris and this is Detective Sergeant Mailheu of Central Station." With that the man threw open the doors and said, "Well, if you are Harris, you surely should know me. I am Allers; I have been trying to sell you a car for the past three weeks."

Again real life showed up that fiction phrase, "Truth is stronger than fiction." Sure enough. Allers had been trying to get in touch with me over the phone. We had never met personally.

We were ushered in, but unfortunately they could not give us any information, other than that there were three men and a little woman and baby named Farley. The girl had red hair and the baby was about six months old.

Fate again played its strange game. Just a few weeks ago we had raided an apartment house on South Main Street and there found a family named Farley. We had suspected these people were connected with a burglar gang.

We had searched their rooms but found nothing at the time and left. We afterward heard through underworld channels how they had laughed at us as they had disposed of all the plunder before we arrived. They moved the next day and we lost trace of them entirely. The gang was supposed to consist of a chap said to be Chicago Blackie and one McCandless and one or two others.

I wondered if this could be our much wanted people. I told Mailheu of my suspicions and we decided that in the morning Wigginton and I would cover the house and

when Ted would come on duty at two the following afternoon we would get together and watch the place. I arranged with Ted to have him call me at a certain place, a house of a friend of mine in this locality, when he came on duty.

The following day we carried out our plan as agreed. Wigginton and I saw Farley drive up to his house and leave a suit of clothes he had just returned from the cleaners. He drove away. Then McCandless and Mrs. Farley left, apparently to go down town. Later we saw the dark complexioned man go out in the back yard and then I knew these were our parties.

I waited until two thirty. Ted had been delayed and had not called me. I went to get something to eat at a corner drug store, when he called my friend's house on the phone, and was told that I had just gone to the corner, but that a big van was backed up to the front curb, and it looked like they were going to move, also six fellows had gone inside the house.

Mailheu took the tip and gathered together a squad of officers consisting of Detectives Yarrow, Tommy O'Brien, Inspector Fred Bowden of the Pharmacy Board and poor John Fitzgerald.

By the time I returned, I found the officers had raided the place and arrested all of the gang, who were shooting craps in the parlor. All were taken to jail and not a bit of trouble had taken place.

They left the wife and baby and her father in the house. That night we all gathered in the detective's office for a conference. It was decided that we would divide the forces and four of us would go out to Watts and try to locate the right place, and redeem my failure of the night before.

Yarrow, Peebles, Mailheu and I started on our party, leaving O'Brien, Bowden, Fitzgerald and a special



officer named Brown to make further investigation of the Farley house in hopes of getting some more bottles said to have come from certain drug store jobs, and which would strengthen their case.

Again our mission proved fruitless. I returned home about midnight and found a badly frightened wife awaiting my coming. "Where have you been?" she asked. I told her and she said, "The Captain of Detectives has just called me up and wanted to know where you have been." She said she told him I was out with Fitzgerald and the other detectives raiding the Farley house, as that was our original plan when I left her. She continued that the officer said, "That's just it. Harris, Mailheau, Yarrow and Peebles have all gone out with Fitz, and Fitzgerald has just been murdered by a Mexican, and they couldn't get a line on us, or where we were." Of course, she being awakened from sound slumber, could imagine only one thing, and that was that all the rest of us had been killed, too.

I immediately left for the station and with the rest of the boys, who had also returned, found out what had happened. Fitz's party had returned to the Farley house and, upon entering, found a young Mexican seated on the lounge, and when they placed him under arrest, he tried to draw a revolver from the front of his trousers. He was overpowered and handcuffed. While O'Brien and Bowden were in the bathroom gathering up the bottles, they heard the door bell ring, and saw Fitzgerald go to the door. As he did so, the first Mexican yelled something in Spanish, and they heard a shot. They saw Fitz rush out the front door and again the stillness of the night was shattered by a volley of shots.

By the time they arrived in the yard, they found big Fitz lying prostrate on the steps of Allers' home, mor-

tally wounded, several bullet wounds in his stomach. He died shortly after.

Our search for the murderer then started. We first interviewed our prisoner and those taken in the raid that afternoon, and found it was Philip Alguin we were after. He was identified immediately by the parole officer, who told us he was a bad actor and had been in trouble ever since he was a kid. It was not until the following morning that we were first told by Detective Sergeant Manuel Leon where Alguin might be found. We raided the home of his father, or brother-in-law, only to find he had left at six o'clock.

Since then this same fate has played to Alguin. The chase has become international, only to finish in the long run, in favor of law and order, as all great criminal cases do. However, every time I read an article in the press about this case, my mind wanders back to the days when I told Fitz to be a policeman, and now to think that in these later years, it was my tip that really resulted in this big man going to his death, and now, with the ending of this series of stories it seems fate has so ordained it, that my last story in this book should be, "The Passing of John Fitzgerald." Thus "truth is stranger than fiction," and once more am I justified in calling attention to my subject:

## "WHY CRIME DOESN'T PAY."

NICHOLAS BOILVIN HARRIS, *Chief,*

NICK HARRIS DETECTIVES,

*Los Angeles, Calif.*

PRINCIPAL OF THE NICK HARRIS PROFESSIONAL DETECTIVE SCHOOL















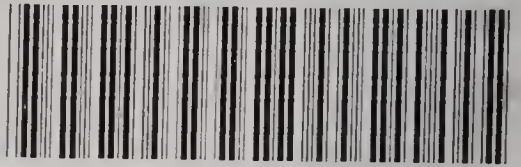






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